

MARVEL MASTERWORKS®
THE FANTASTIC FOUR®
VOLUME 17



THE FANTASTIC FOUR Nos. 176-191
ROY THOMAS, LEN WEIN & GEORGE PÉREZ
WITH SAL BUSCEMA & RON WILSON

MARVEL

MARVEL MASTERWORKS
PRESENTS

THE Fantastic FOUR

VOLUME 17

COLLECTING

THE FANTASTIC FOUR Nos. 176-191

ROY THOMAS • LEN WEIN

GEORGE PÉREZ

WITH SAL BUSCEMA & RON WILSON



Collection Editor
Cory Sedlmeier
Book Design
Nickel Design Works
SVP Print, Sales & Marketing
David Gabriel
Digital Manager/Production
Tim Smith 3
Digital Production
Kou Chen
Editor in Chief
Axel Alonso
Chief Creative Officer
Joe Quesada
Publisher
Dan Buckley
Executive Producer
Alan Fine

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

CREDITS

THE FANTASTIC FOUR

Nos. 176-191

Writers: Roy Thomas (Nos. 176-179, 181)

Len Wein (Nos. 182, 184-188, 191)

Mike Friedrich (No. 178)

Gerry Conway (No. 179)

Bill Mantlo (Nos. 182, 183)

Jim Shooter (No. 182)

Archie Goodwin (No. 182)

Marv Wolfman (No. 190)

Pencilers: George Pérez (Nos. 176-178, 184-188, 191)

Sal Buscema (Nos. 182, 183, 190)

Ron Wilson (Nos. 179, 181)

Inkers: Joe Sinnott (Nos. 176, 177, 179, 181-188, 191)

Dave Hunt (No. 178)

Tony DeZuniga (No. 190)

Letterers: Joe Rosen (Nos. 176-179, 181, 184, 187, 188)

John Costanza (Nos. 182, 186, 190, 191)

Gaspar Saladino (Nos. 183, 185)

Colorists: Michelle Wolfman (No. 176)

Marie Severin (No. 177)

Dave Hunt (No. 178)

George Roussos (Nos. 179, 181, 182)

Phil Rachelson (No. 183)

Glynis Wein (No. 184-188, 190, 191)

**Editors: Roy Thomas, Archie Goodwin, Len Wein
& Marv Wolfman**

Color & Art Reconstruction: All Thumbs Creative

Special Thanks: Nick Elkins

FANTASTIC FOUR CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

CONTENTS

Preface by Roy Thomas

Introduction by Len Wein

The Fantastic Four #176, November 1976

“Improbable as it May Seem--The Impossible Man is Back in Town!”

The Fantastic Four #177, December 1976

“Look Out for the Frightful Four!”

The Fantastic Four #178, January 1977

“Call My Killer--The Brute!”

The Fantastic Four #179, February 1977

“A Robinson Crusoe in the Negative Zone!”

Cover art from *The Fantastic Four #180, March 1977*

The Fantastic Four #181, April 1977

“Side by Side with...Annihilus??”

The Fantastic Four #182, May 1977

“Enter: The Mad Thinker!”

The Fantastic Four #183, June 1977

“Battleground: The Baxter Building!”

The Fantastic Four #184, July 1977

“Aftermath: The Eliminator!”

The Fantastic Four #185, August 1977

“Here There Be Witches!”

The Fantastic Four #186, September 1977

“Enter: Salem’s Seven!”

The Fantastic Four #187, October 1977

“Trouble Times Two!”

The Fantastic Four #188, November 1977

“The Rampage of Reed Richards!”

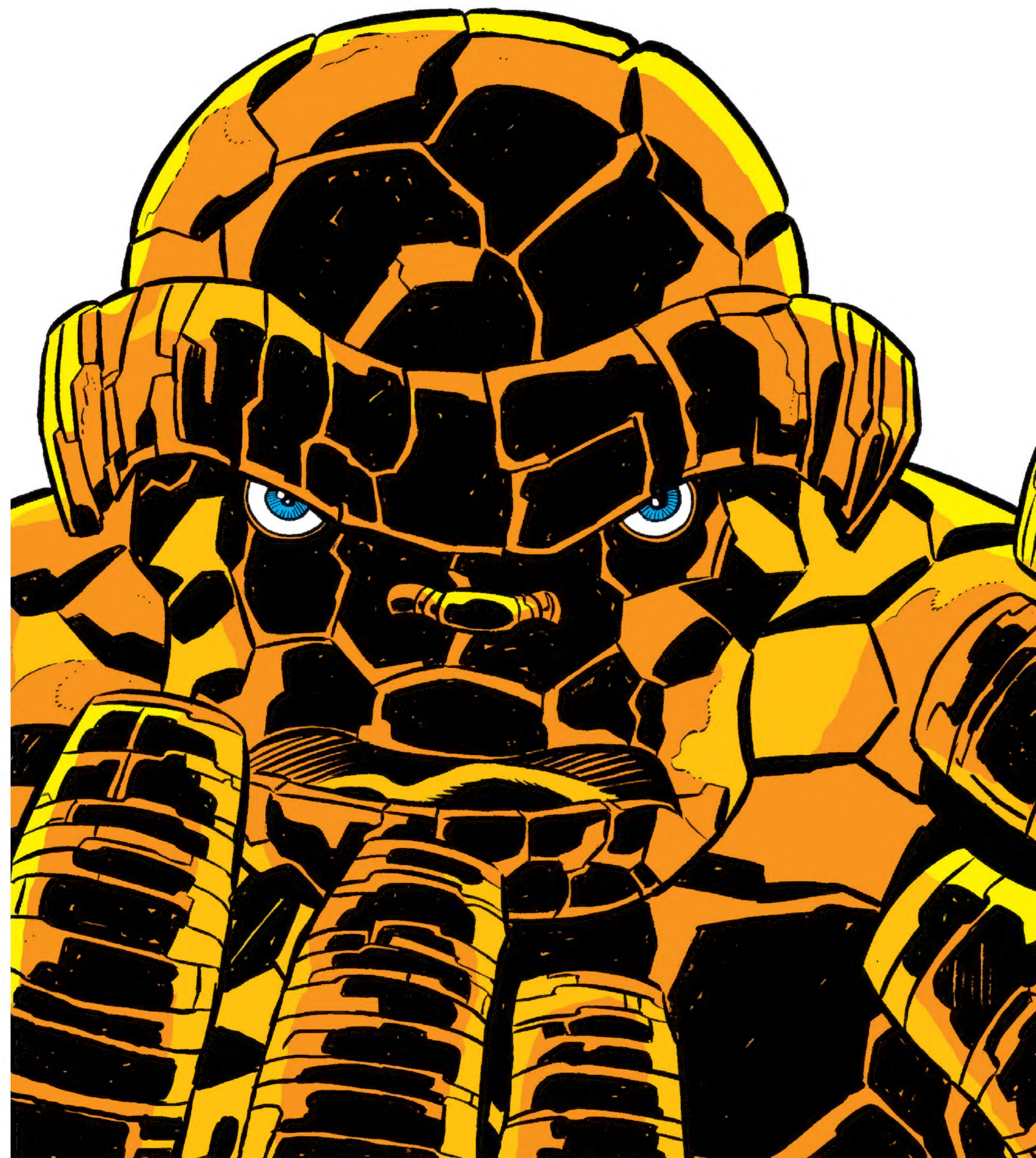
Cover art from *The Fantastic Four #189, December 1977*

The Fantastic Four #190, January 1978

“The Way It Was”

The Fantastic Four #191, February 1978

“Four No More”



P R E F A C E

B Y R O Y T H O M A S

My longtime friend and colleague Len Wein and I are dividing the writing chores on this introduction—just as, back in 1977, during sixteenth year of *Fantastic Four*, we divvied up the scripting of the comic itself.

I wish I could tell you that in 1976 artist George Pérez and I planned *FF* #176 as an anniversary celebration of “The World’s Greatest Comic Magazine” marking a decade and a half on the nation’s newsstands. But we considered it just one more monthly issue—except that, by my lights, and those of quite a few other people since, it *wasn’t*.

George, then a young talent barely into his still-burgeoning career, had just become the *FF*’s regular artist. Already aware of his abilities, I figured it was a good time to try—*again*—to bring back the Impossible Man.

Y’see, when Impy had made his one and only previous appearance, in *FF* #11 in late 1962, co-creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby had been very fond of the little green man from the planet Poppup. As a reader, I loved that story, which reminded me of a 1950s science-fiction novel, *Martian, Go Home!* by Frederick Pohl. I wrote and told Stan so, only to be advised that he was unfamiliar with that book.

So, naturally, when in the early ’70s I became one of the first post-Lee *FF* scribes, I wanted to bring back the Impossible Man. But I’d known, ever since coming to work for Stan, that in ’62 there’d been an outpouring of letters from fans who absolutely *hated* that yarn and never wanted to see Impy again! Stan took them seriously and wouldn’t let me use him in a story.

By 1976, however, Stan was more willing to accept the judgment of his writers and editors (and I was both), so George and I plowed ahead. The result was a romp that’s become one of the most-reprinted issues of *FF* after the Lee/Kirby era. Part of the reason is the appeal of Impy himself, in an era when Howard the Duck was coming to prominence (and I’ll freely admit that the readers’ earlier response to Impy was the major reason I forced poor Steve Gerber to “kill off” Howard at the end of his debut in a “Man-Thing” tale—not my smartest move ever)—and part is because George and I pulled out all the stops and even had Impy pay a visit to the mighty Marvel offices. He even interrupted a conference of Stan, Jack, George, and myself—four individuals who in Real Life were never in the same room at the same time. George also excelled at drawing production manager (and my good friend) John Verpoorten, a few other guys (including Len Wein, John Romita, and editor-in-chief Archie Goodwin), and the Marvel offices themselves.

As an added bonus, I got Kirby to pencil the cover. His drawing of Impy with one hand as Iron Man’s power glove and another Thor’s hammer influenced George, who was halfway through penciling the story, to incorporate that scene into the plot. All in all, the issue was pretty much a total winner.

And, while it isn’t reprinted nearly as often, I personally was nearly as proud of the follow-up story, in which three of the Frightful Four interviewed potential candidates for their fourth member. My favorite applicant was Captain Ultra, who had fantastic super-powers...but passed out in the presence of an open flame. A real occupational hazard in a line of work that was likely to include a lot of explosions. He was, of course, a takeoff on DC’s Martian Manhunter, a charter member of its Justice League of America. And, by story’s end, we brought in the Brute, the Reed Richards of Counter-Earth, turned into an evil monster.

Comparably speaking, the remaining several issues I wrote in this run were a bit more pedestrian, but I like to think they had their moments. In #178 came one Four's (the Fantastic) showdown with the other (the Frightful), and brought the Impossible Man firmly into the mag's continuity for a while. By that point, we couldn't have gauged the readership's reaction—thumbs up or thumbs down—but I've always been convinced the best creative decisions are made on the basis of rational thinking and emotional gut-feelings, not focus groups or polls. Fortunately, this time, I was right, and when the mail came in, the readers—which now probably averaged a bit older than when Impy'd first appeared in *FF* #11—were wildly enthusiastic about his return. They liked the addition of Thundra and Tigra to the action, as well.

For some reason, my pal Gerry Conway had to spell me on #179, handling the now-slightly-overcrowded *FF*, with Impy, Tigra, and Thundra all hanging around the Baxter Building to take the place of the absent Sue. He did a sterling job—not surprising, since he'd scripted several *FF* issues before, and it was a favorite title of his. The art chores fell to talented newcomer Ron Wilson, who was then cutting his eyeteeth penciling covers for reprint issues, including those starring the *FF*.

Issue #180, embarrassingly, had to become a reprint of an earlier Lee/Kirby issue. I'm not sure why, except that in mid-1976, over the Bicentennial July 4th weekend, I had moved from New York to Los Angeles (after first accepting, then reneging on, an invitation from Stan to try a second stint as Marvel's editor-in-chief), and I was adjusting to a new kind of life in sunny California—and not hunkering down to work the way I should. But that's just an explanation, not an excuse.

I was back on the stands with #181. George had now moved on from penciling the book, but Ron Wilson was proving an able replacement. Impy continued to be part of the team, and writing him was almost as much fun as putting dialogue into the mouth of my all-time favorite Marvel hero, the Thing. (I also liked having Thundra around, whom John Buscema and I had cocreated a few years earlier.)

Actually, although I'm a big believer that the Fantastic Four consists, and ultimately should always consist, of Reed, Sue, the Torch, and the Thing, I never worried that much about writing any individual member out of the team for a few issues...as long as bashful Ben Grimm stuck around. To me, the *FF* without the Thing isn't the *FF*, but just some gang of guys. I'd fallen in love with *FF* #1 that day in the summer of '61 when I first saw the Thing as drawn by Jack and read his dialogue as written by Stan—and I've never seen anything since to make me change my mind about him.

All the same, the aforementioned distractions of my new West Coast life led me to alter my priorities and to concentrate such energies as I had left over for comics on other titles, particularly the *Conan* ones. Thus, after #181, I turned the *FF*'s reins over to editor-in-chief Archie Goodwin, who in turn soon handed them over into the more-than-capable hands of Len Wein.

So I'll let him pick up the behind-the-scene badinage from this point....



2014

*Roy Thomas has been a writer and editor in the comic book field since 1965. He still scripts comics when he gets the chance, edits the comics-history magazine *Alter Ego*, and since 2000 has worked with Stan Lee on the *Amazing Spider-Man* newspaper comic strip. He is the author of the humongous 2014 book *75 Years of Marvel: From Golden Age to Silver Screen*, from Taschen Publishing.*

INTRODUCTION

BY LEN WEIN

Okay, so I'm going to let you all in on my deepest, darkest secret; I came this close to not even buying *Fantastic Four* #1, and thus missing out on the beginning of one of the comic industry's greatest legends and perhaps even the opportunity to have written the glorious adventures collected herein. Let me explain.

In 1961, I was thirteen years old and living in Levittown, New York, the cliché of the east, as I liked to call it. In those fondly remembered days, I bought my then twice-weekly comics (yep, in those days, new books were released every Tuesday and Thursday) at the local corner drugstore. Back then, there were two ways of racking new comics; one was one book above another, as on one of those classic comics spinner racks long lost to memory (though I must admit to having one just behind my right shoulder even as I type this) so only the top third of the cover, basically just the logo, would show. The other method was to rack the new books side-by-side, so only the left third of the cover showed. My drugstore chose the former method.

In those days, I collected all the super-hero comics I could find, most of them produced by Marvel's Distinguished Competition. At the time, Marvel (originally known as Timely Comics and then Atlas) was publishing titles like *Journey Into Mystery* (later to star The Mighty Thor), *Tales to Astonish* (soon to feature The Astonishing Ant-Man and The Incredible Hulk), *Tales of Suspense* (which would eventually star The Invincible Iron Man and Captain America) and *Strange Tales* (which would one day star The Human Torch, Doctor Strange, and Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.). In those days, however, these were mystery anthology books, featuring such monstrous legends as Groot; Sporr; Googam, Son of Goom; and, of course, Spamm, the Luncheon Meat that Walked Like a Man.

Now, I had been buying the Timely titles on a random basis, my purchases decided pretty much by how cool the covers (usually by the late, great Jack Kirby) were. Often, they were cool enough to be worthy of my hard-earned dimes, but, as I said, my participation was still occasional.

And then along came *The Fantastic Four*. I don't remember if it was a Tuesday or a Thursday when I first saw that red logo glaring out at me from the comics rack at my local drugstore. All I know was that I ignored it. Why? Well, it didn't look quite like anything I'd ever seen before. It certainly didn't look anything like the logo of a super-hero comic. There was no elongated lettering, no precise black line around the lettering, nothing. So I figured it was probably some weird sort of funny animal book and I ignored it. I let it just sit on the rack, unexamined for the next few weeks as I continued to pick up the newest super-hero comics I recognized.

Then it happened. I'd bought every new super-hero comic I thought was available to me and was preparing to leave the shop when I noticed that someone had bought the last copy of the book on the rack below *FF* #1, so I could finally see more of the cover. It looked sort of like a super-hero book, with people displaying extraordinary powers, but there were still the inevitable monsters dominating the cover. I almost put the book back, when I noticed the blurb that sold it for me. "TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME," it said, "MISTER FANTASTIC! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! THE THING!" And that was that. I was hooked. My 13-year-old brain absorbed the phrase "Together for the first time" and logically figured, "Well, if this book is where these characters get together for the first time, then they must have been in other books separately in the past." After all, I had some vague memory of having heard the name *The Human Torch* somewhere in my distant past.

At that age, there was nothing I loved more than getting to try out a whole bunch of different series at once. That's why, when I discovered the work of Edgar Rice Burroughs, the first of his many books that I read was *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, which enabled me to sample both the *Tarzan* series and Burroughs' *Pellucidar* series, featuring, appropriately enough, the adventures of explorer David Innes at the Earth's Core.

I read that first issue of the FF and I was hooked. Granted, they weren't your typical super-hero team. For one thing, they didn't wear costumes (at least, not at first); they didn't really get along all the time (something never seen before in comics); and they were really more of a family than a team. But, still, I loved them. Man, did I love them. Here was something never seen before in the history of comics, something groundbreaking, something innovative, something...addictive.

Fantastic Four #1 was a turning point in the direction of comics, and it led the way for The Incredible Hulk, Thor, Ant-Man, Iron Man, and, of course, The Amazing Spider-Man. Slowly, but surely, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and the singular Steve Ditko, together built a fictional universe unlike any that had come before it, and one which continues to unfold and evolve every month.

And that, via the most circuitous route since Magellan circumnavigated the globe, brings us to the stories in this collection. As I recall after all these many years, this was my second (perhaps third) attempt to become the regular writer on the *Fantastic Four*. I had done a few issues before, replacing then-regular writer Roy Thomas on a multi-parter involving Doctor Doom and the Silver Surfer. For reasons I no longer remember, I never stuck with the title, so it came as quite a surprise to me when then editor in chief Marv Wolfman came to me one afternoon and said, "I want you to take over writing the Fantastic Four." I looked at him in astonishment as I replied, "Seriously? But I'm already writing *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Hulk*, and *Thor*, and I'm a week late on all my deadlines. How can I possibly take on a fourth monthly title?" Marv looked at me and said, "I know you. Adding another book won't make you any later. It's just that now you'll be a week behind on four titles instead of three." "Okay," I said, "You're the boss." And I was off and running.

I was fortunate enough to take over the book just as my old friend and legendary penciler George Pérez was returning to the FF. We had the best time playing in that particular sandbox, especially bringing back the much-beloved and extraordinarily silly Impossible Man. Impy could not have been more fun to play with.

Those really are most of my clear memories of those days, save for the fact that, for once, I remember where I'd planned to go with the series for the next year after the team split up in "Four No More." For the first third of the year, I planned to do solo stories with each member of the team, advancing the stories of the other members through subplots; the second third of the year, I'd start teaming them up in mixed pairs, and, by the end of the year, the Fantastic Four would be together again.

Because, let's face it, people, Reed Richards, Susan Richards, Johnny Storm, and Ben Grimm are a family, and what Stan Lee and Jack Kirby hath joined together, let no one dare to split asunder.

Hope you have as much fun reading these classic tales as I did writing them.

Excelsior!

Len Wein
Northridge, CA
January 7, 2015

FANTASTIC
FOUR

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



30¢

176

NOV
02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR®

HE'S RETURNED--AND HE'S
MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER!
**THE IMPOSSIBLE
MAN IS BACK!**

YOU'RE
TELLIN'
ME!?

MARVEL COMICS
CONFERENCE
ROOM



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

IMPROBABLE AS IT MAY SEEM-- The IMPOSSIBLE MAN IS BACK IN TOWN!

BUT FIRST, A FEW
WORDS OF EXISTENTIAL
WISDOM FROM THE
JEAL-PAUL SARTRE
OF THE SUPERHERO
SET:

WOTTA
REVOLTING
DEVELOPMENT
THIS IS!

ONE MINUTE
I'M BEN GRIMM--
JUST A NORMAL
JOE, WEARIN' AN
ARMORED SUIT
THAT TURNS ME
INTA THE EVER-
LOVIN' BLOCK-
BUSTIN' THING--

THE NEXT, I'M
AN ORANGE-
SCALED
MONSTER
AGAIN-- FOR
REAL!

AN' I
DON'T MIND
TELLIN' YOU
I DON'T LIKE
IT-- NOT
ONE BIT!

AN OFFBEAT F. F. EPIC BY:

ROY THOMAS * GEORGE & JOE PEREZ SINNOTT
WRITER/EDITOR ARTISTS/STORYTELLERS

MICHELE W.
COLORIST

JOE ROSEN
LETTERER



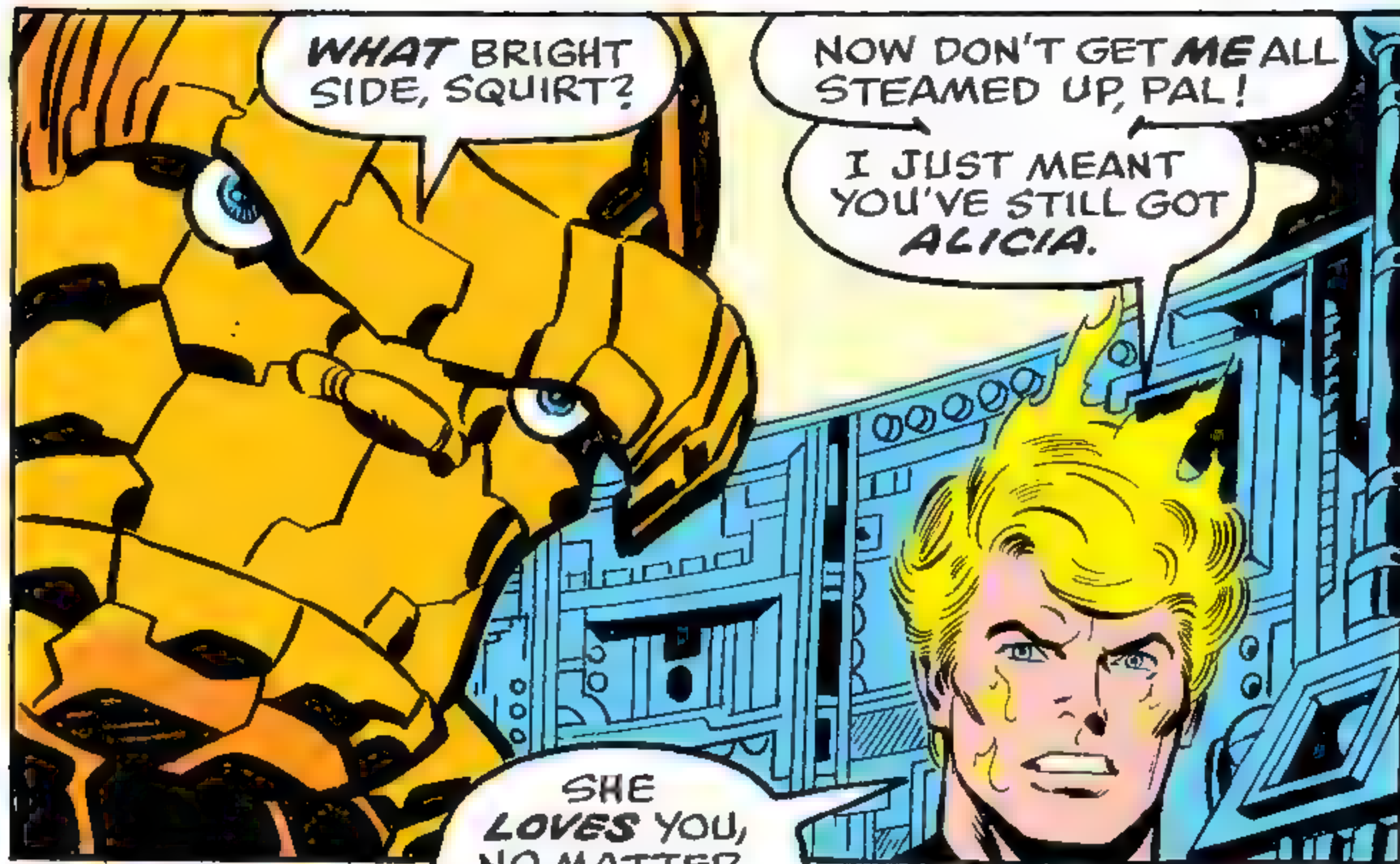
WE...**KNOW** HOW YOU MUST **FEEL**, BEN...!

DO YOU? I **DOUBT** IT.

I WONDER IF **ANYBODY** CAN KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, WHO **AIN'T BEEN** THERE.

I **TORE** **OUTTA** YER PRECIOUS **EXO-SKELETON** LIKE DOC SAVAGE RIPPIN' A **T-SHIRT!**

LOOK AT THE **BRIGHT** SIDE, OL' BUDDY...

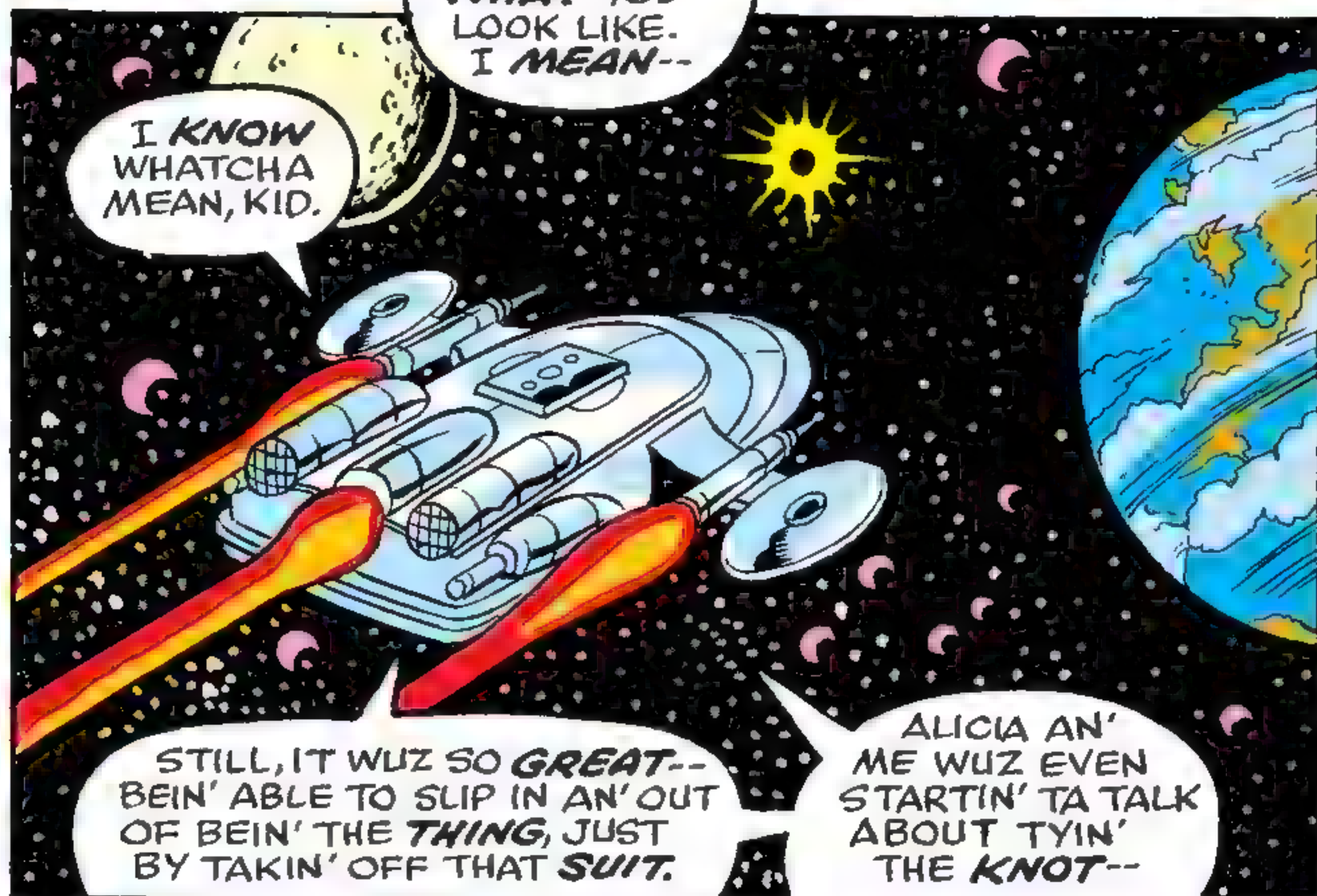


WHAT BRIGHT SIDE, SQUIRT?

NOW DON'T GET **ME** ALL STEAMED UP, PAL!

I JUST MEANT YOU'VE STILL GOT **ALICIA**.

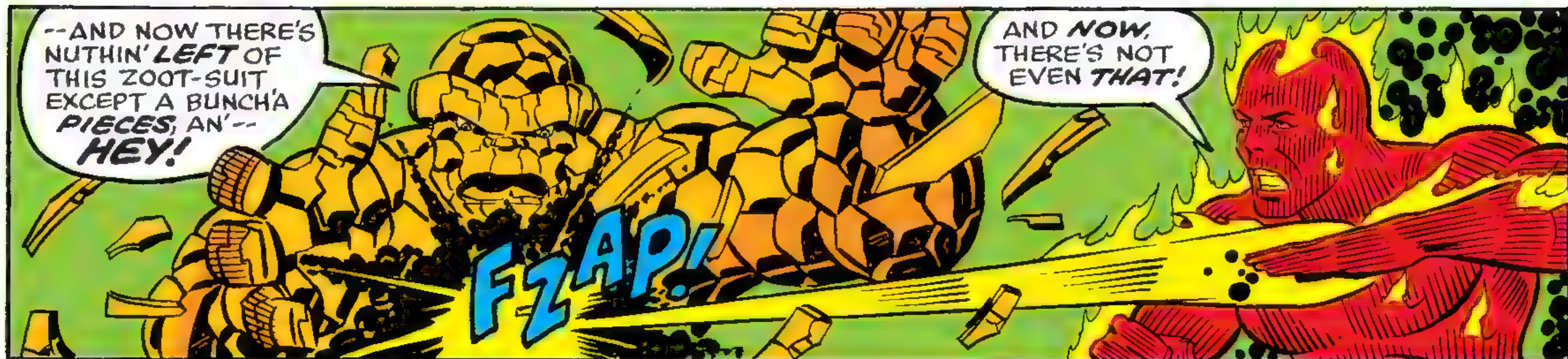
SHE **LOVES** YOU, NO MATTER **WHAT** YOU LOOK LIKE. I **MEAN--**



I **KNOW** WHATCHA MEAN, KID.

STILL, IT WUZ SO **GREAT--** BEIN' ABLE TO SLIP IN AN' OUT OF BEIN' THE **THING**, JUST BY TAKIN' OFF THAT **SUIT**.

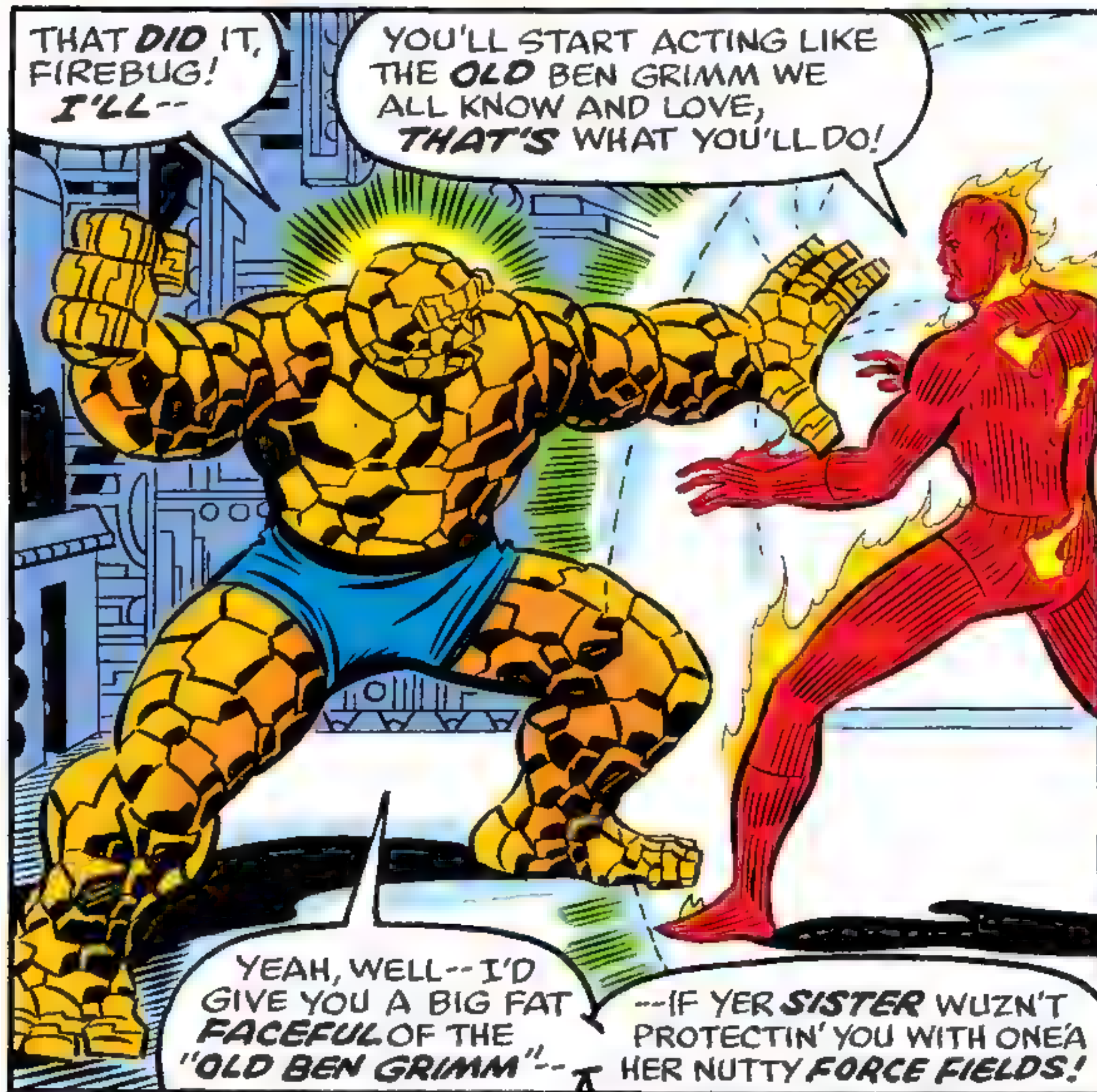
ALICIA AN' ME WUZ EVEN STARTIN' TA TALK ABOUT TYIN' THE **KNOT--**



--AND NOW THERE'S NUTHIN' **LEFT** OF THIS 'ZOOT-SUIT EXCEPT A BUNCH'A **PIECES**, AN'-- **HEY!**

AND **NOW**, THERE'S NOT EVEN **THAT!**

FZAP!

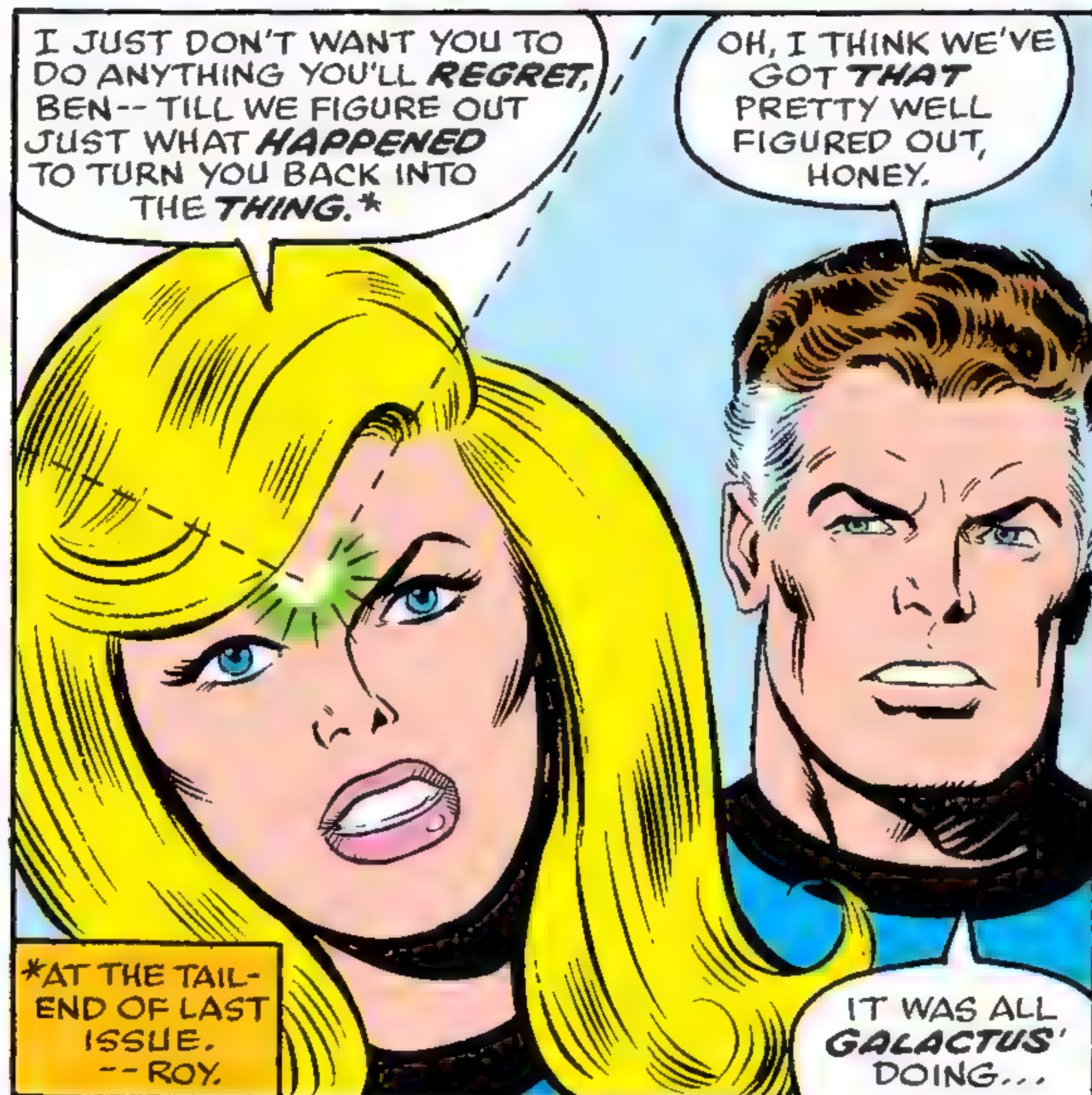


THAT **DID** IT, FIREBUG! I'LL--

YOU'LL START ACTING LIKE THE **OLD** BEN GRIMM WE ALL KNOW AND LOVE, **THAT'S** WHAT YOU'LL DO!

YEAH, WELL-- I'D GIVE YOU A BIG FAT **FACEFUL** OF THE "OLD BEN GRIMM"--

--IF YER **SISTER** WUZN'T PROTECTIN' YOU WITH ONE'A HER NUTTY **FORCE FIELDS!**

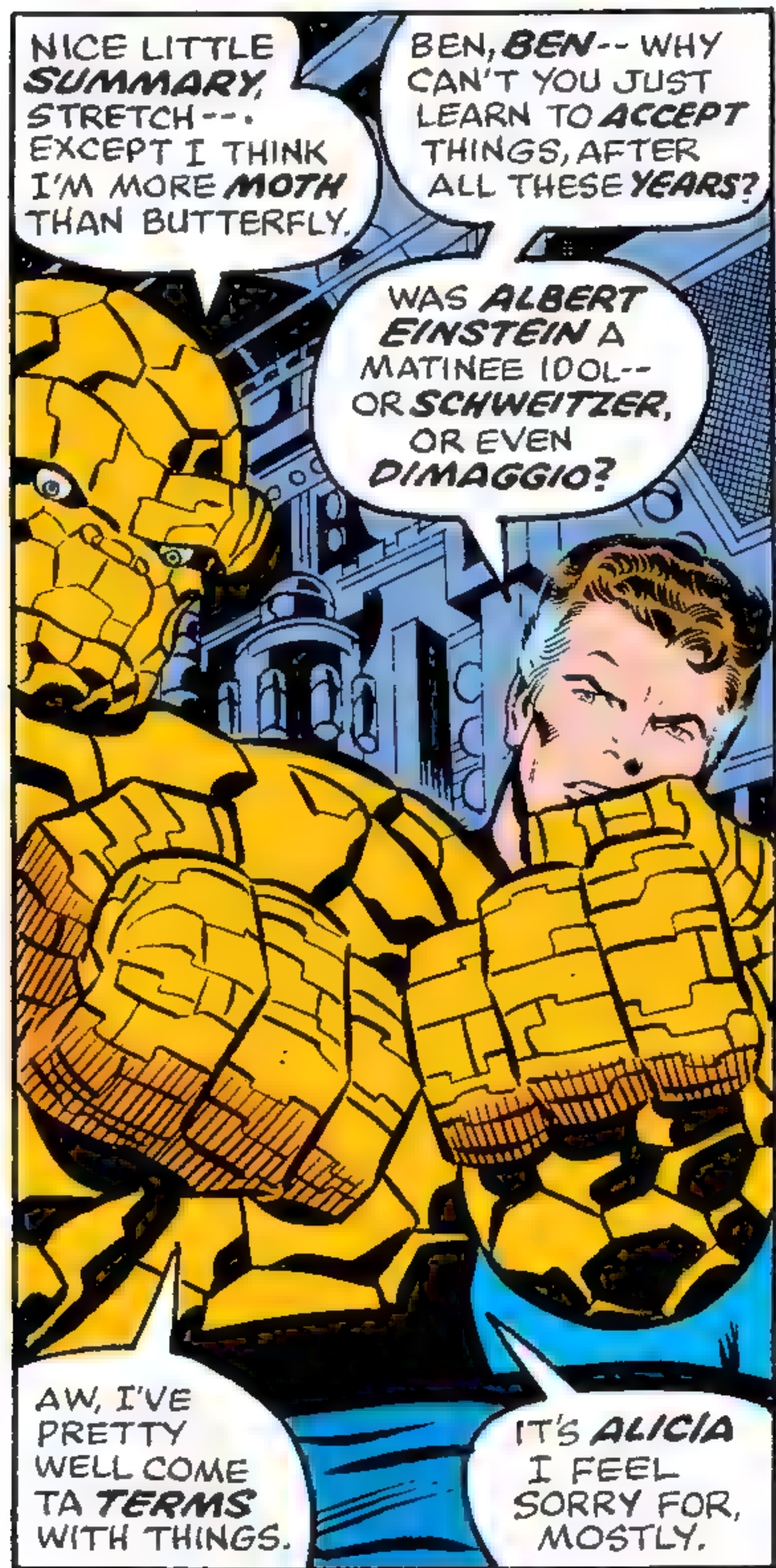
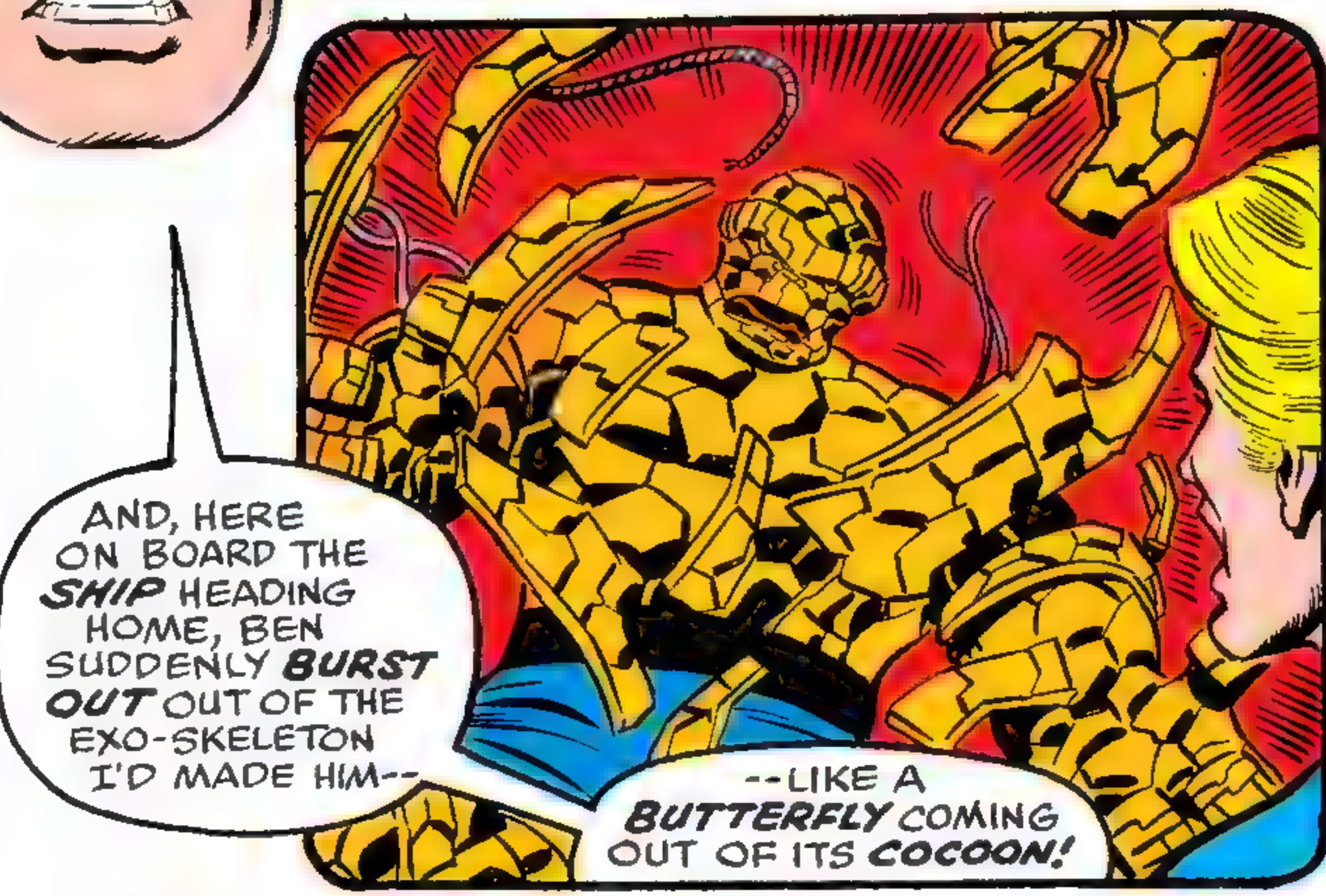
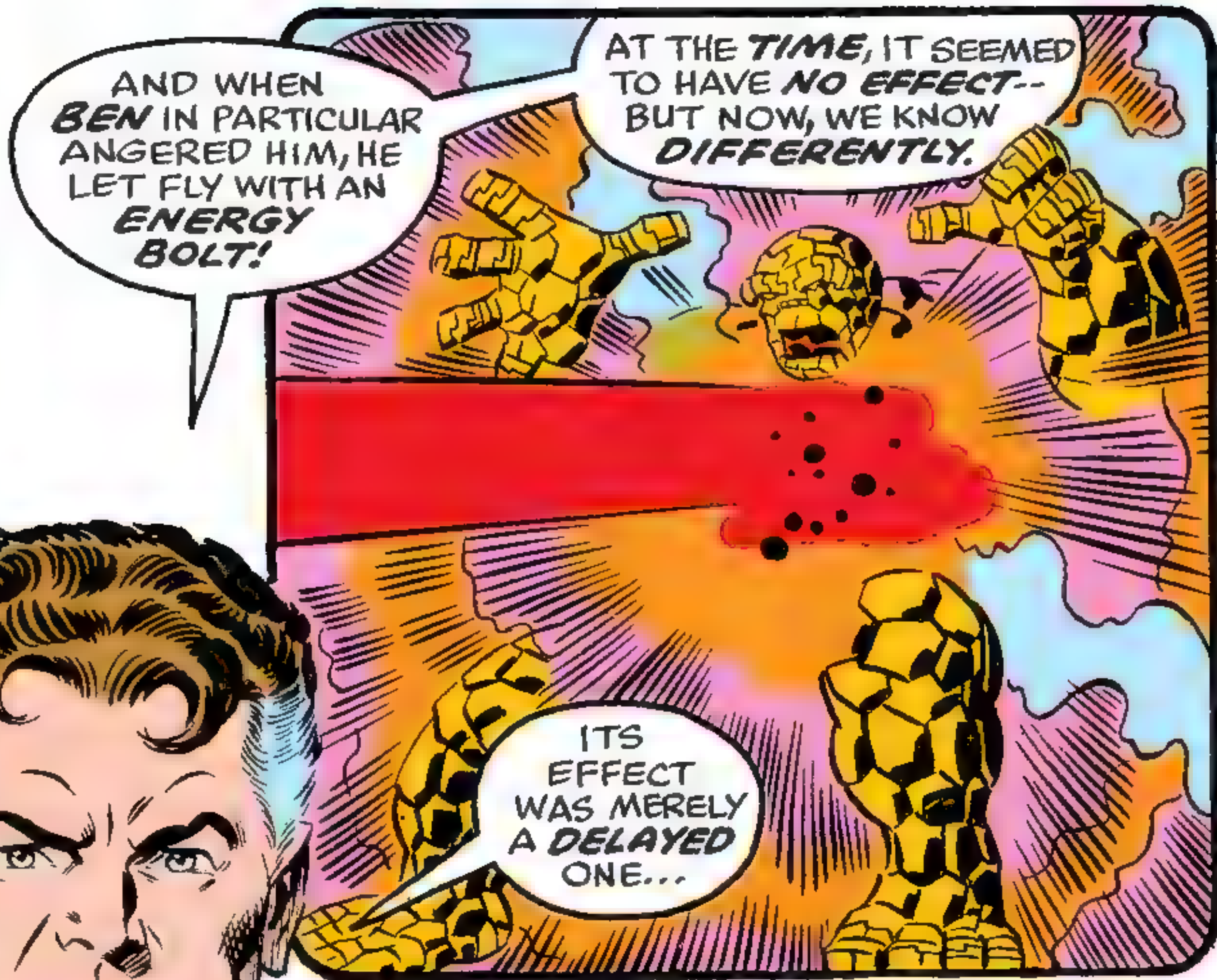
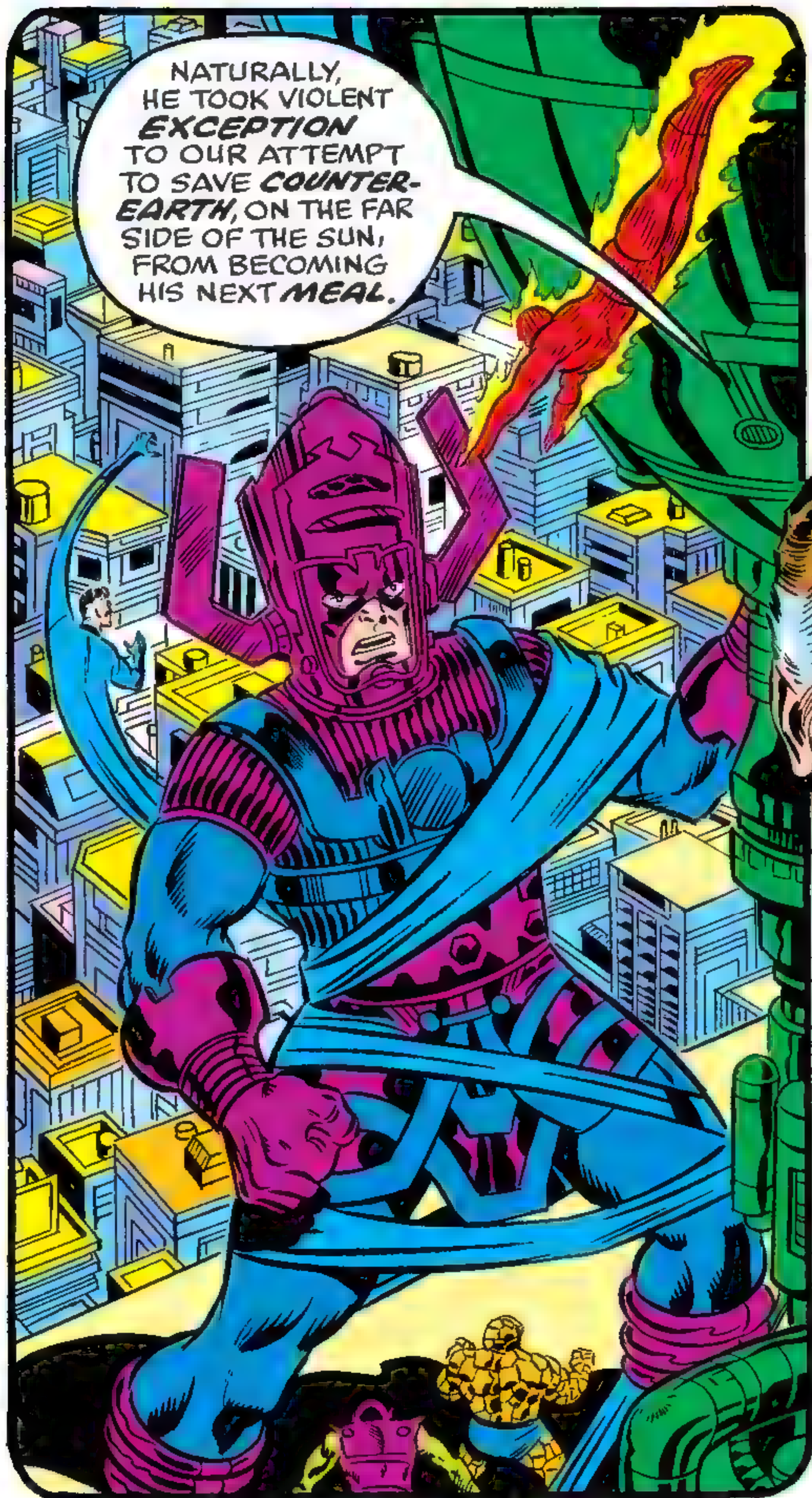


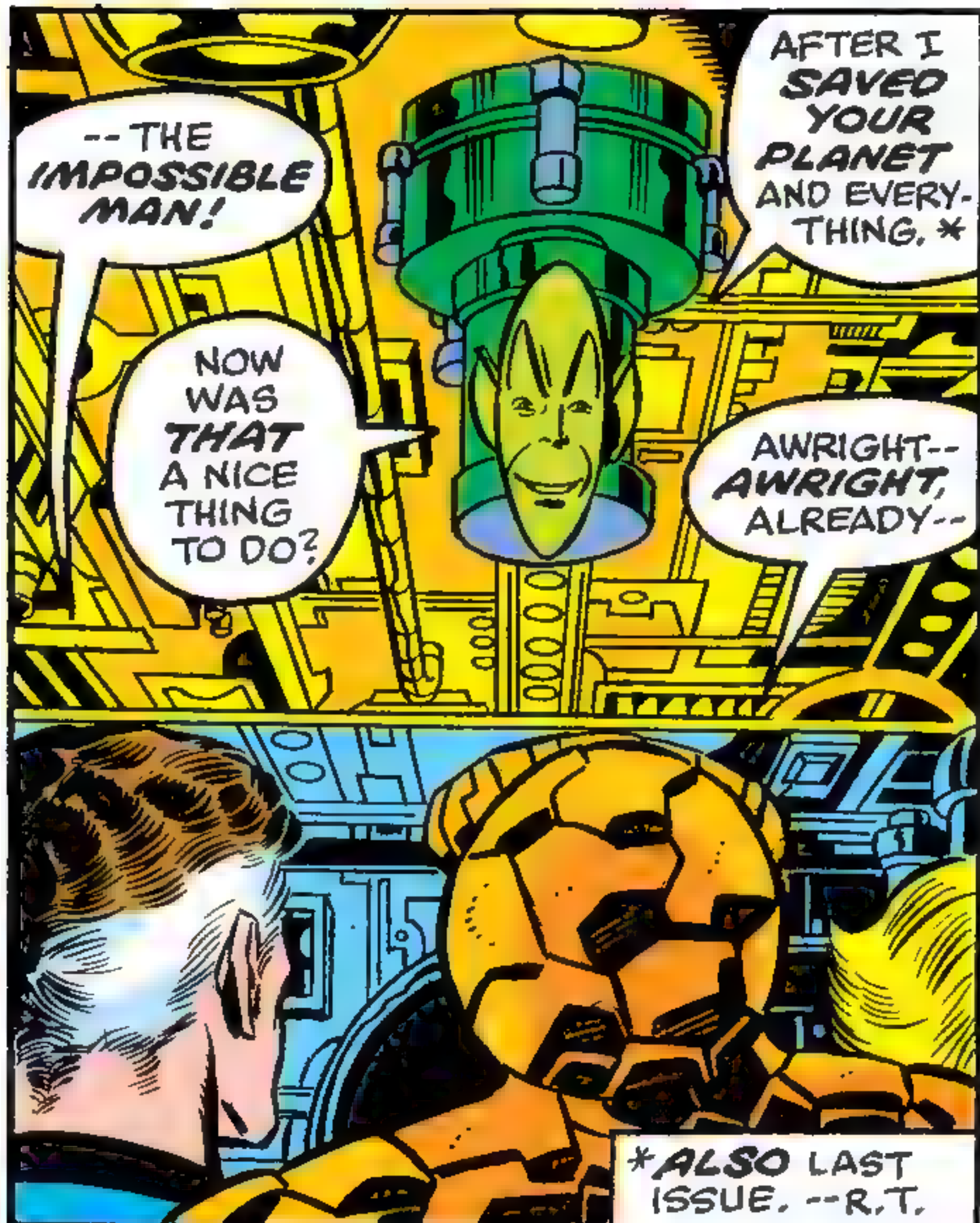
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO DO ANYTHING YOU'LL **REGRET**, BEN-- TILL WE FIGURE OUT JUST WHAT **HAPPENED** TO TURN YOU BACK INTO THE **THING**.*

OH, I THINK WE'VE GOT **THAT** PRETTY WELL FIGURED OUT, HONEY.

*AT THE **TAIL-END** OF LAST ISSUE. -- ROY.

IT WAS ALL **GALACTUS'** DOING...





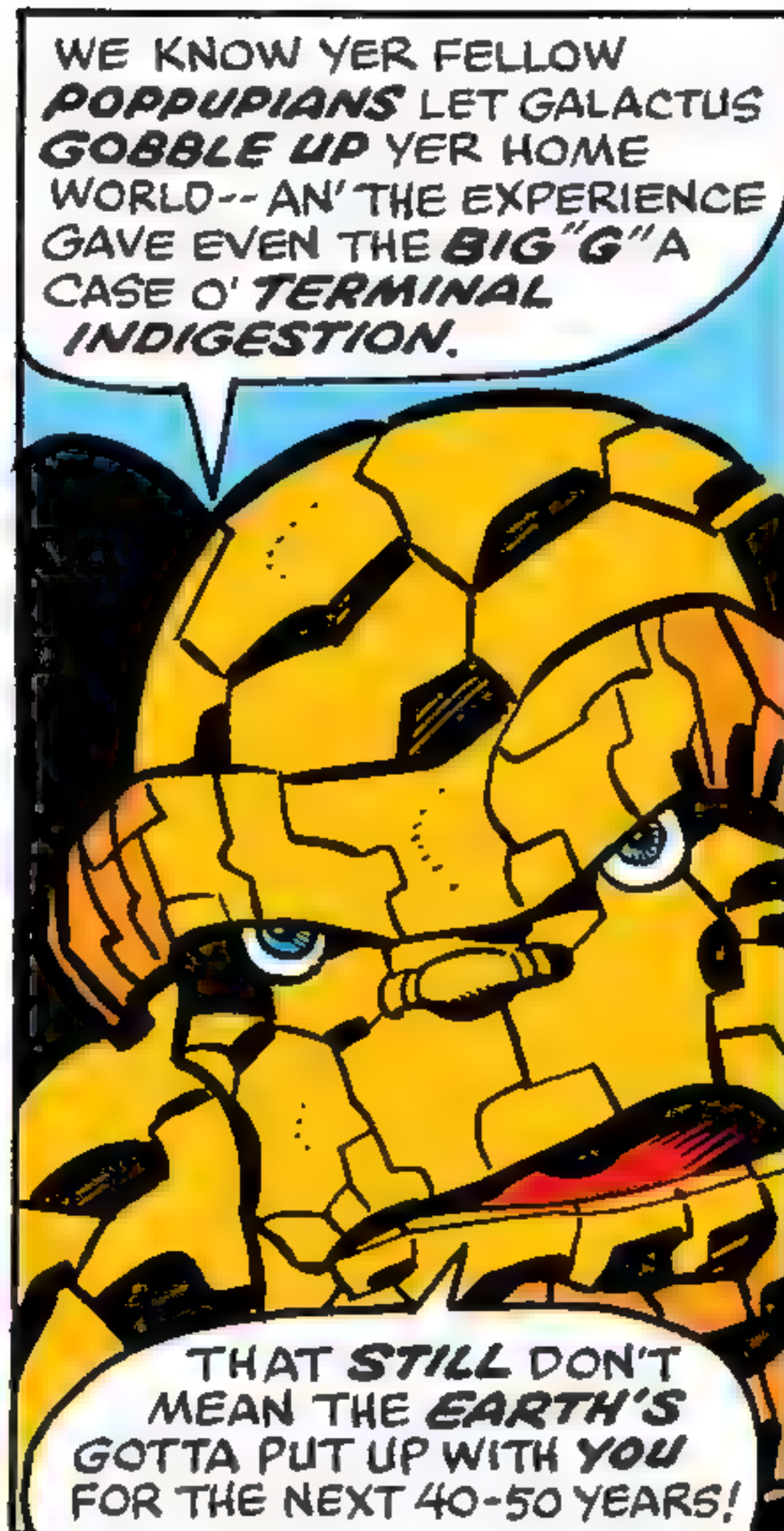
-- THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN!

NOW WAS THAT A NICE THING TO DO?

AFTER I SAVED YOUR PLANET AND EVERY-THING, *

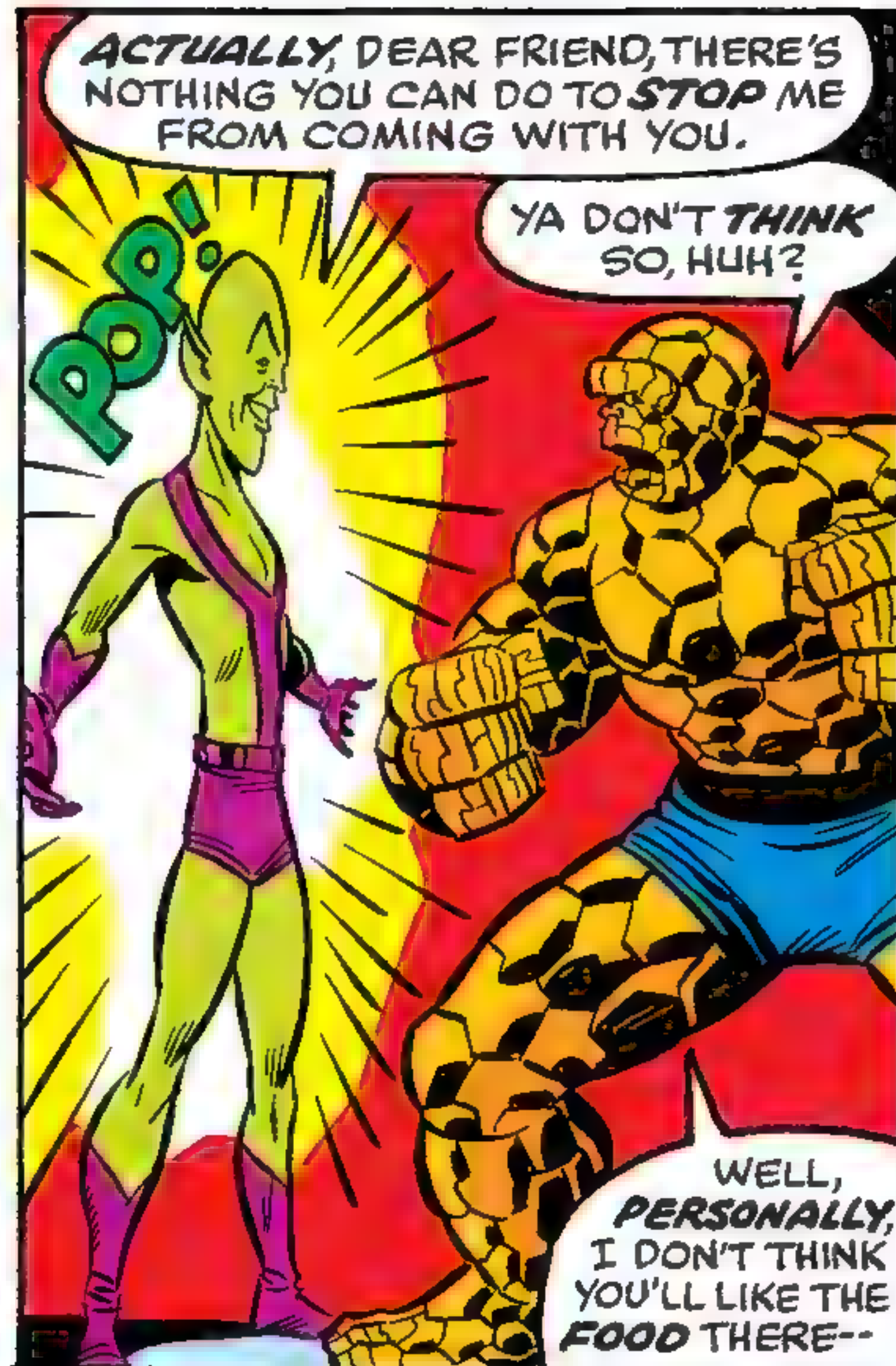
AWRIGHT--AWRIGHT, ALREADY--

*ALSO LAST ISSUE. --R.T.



WE KNOW YER FELLOW POPPUPIANS LET GALACTUS GOBBLE UP YER HOME WORLD-- AN' THE EXPERIENCE GAVE EVEN THE BIG "G" A CASE O' TERMINAL INDIGESTION.

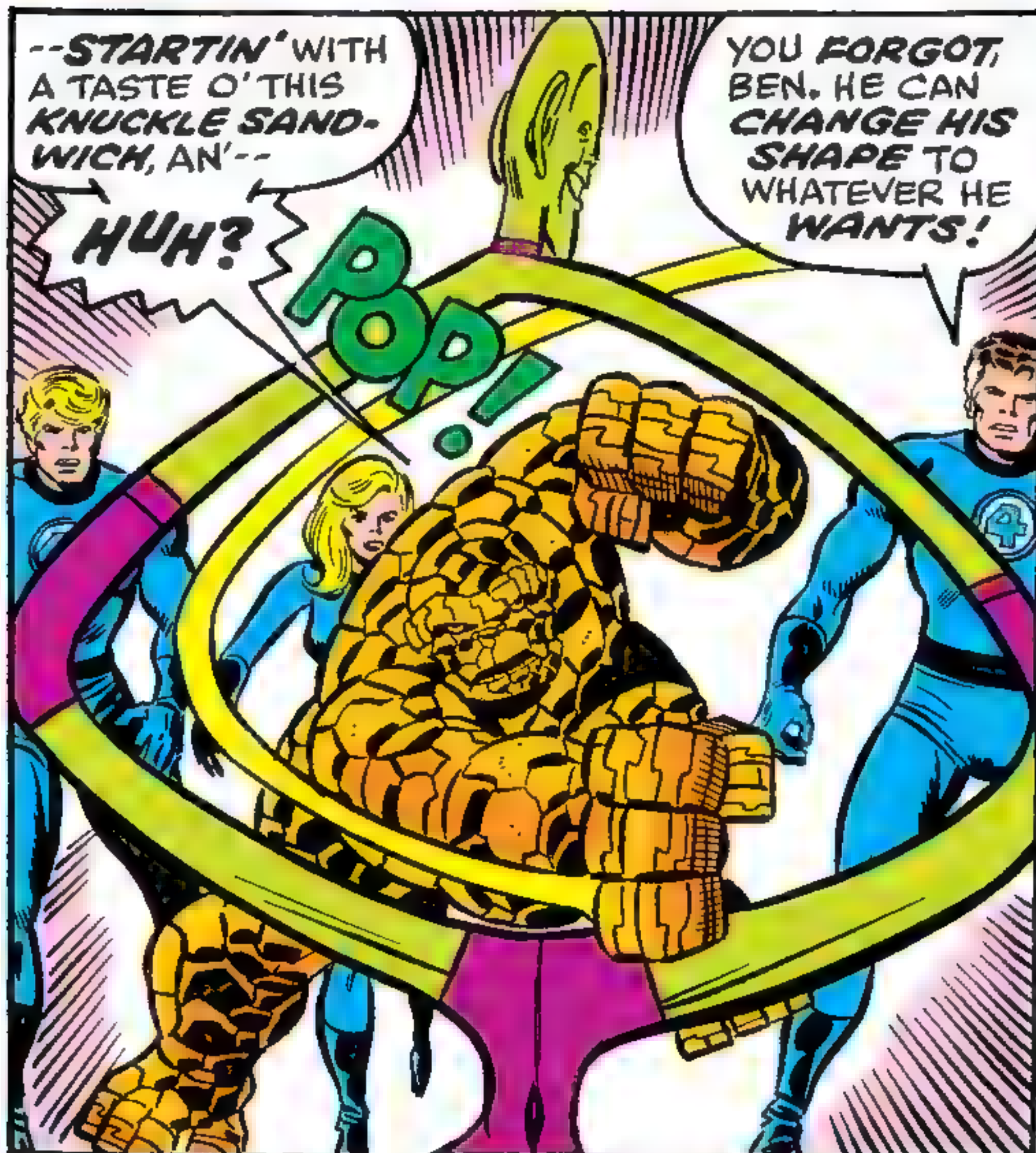
THAT STILL DON'T MEAN THE EARTH'S GOTTA PUT UP WITH YOU FOR THE NEXT 40-50 YEARS!



ACTUALLY, DEAR FRIEND, THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME FROM COMING WITH YOU.

YA DON'T THINK SO, HUH?

WELL, PERSONALLY, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL LIKE THE FOOD THERE--



--STARTIN' WITH A TASTE O' THIS KNUCKLE SANDWICH, AN'--

HUH?

POP!

YOU FORGOT, BEN. HE CAN CHANGE HIS SHAPE TO WHATEVER HE WANTS!



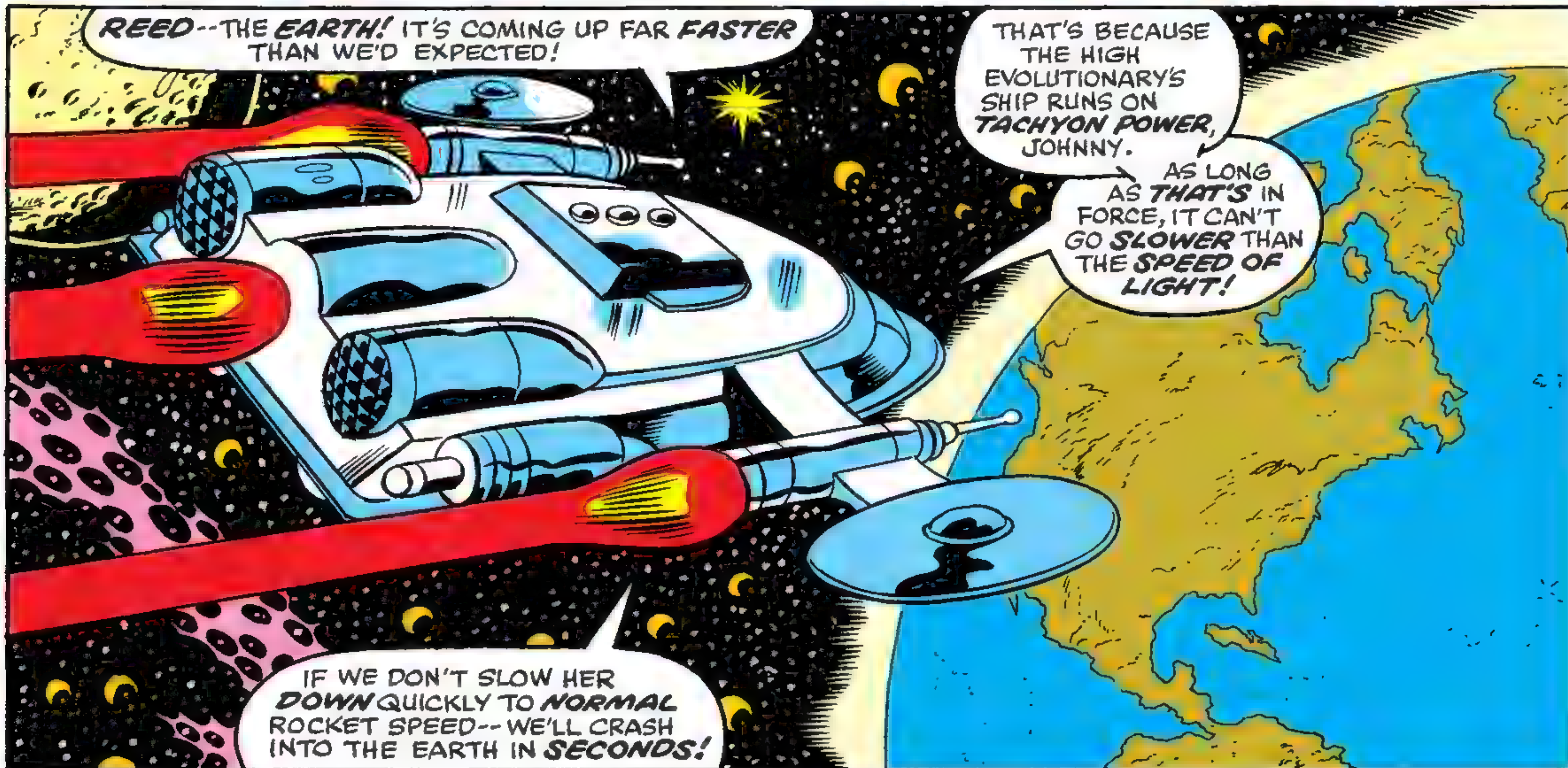
NUTS! I FINALLY GET MY NATURAL STRENGTH BACK...

...AN' THE FIRST BOZO I RUN INTO, IT DON'T DO ME ANY GOOD!



WAIT! FUN-AND-GAMES TIME IS OVER!

LOOK!

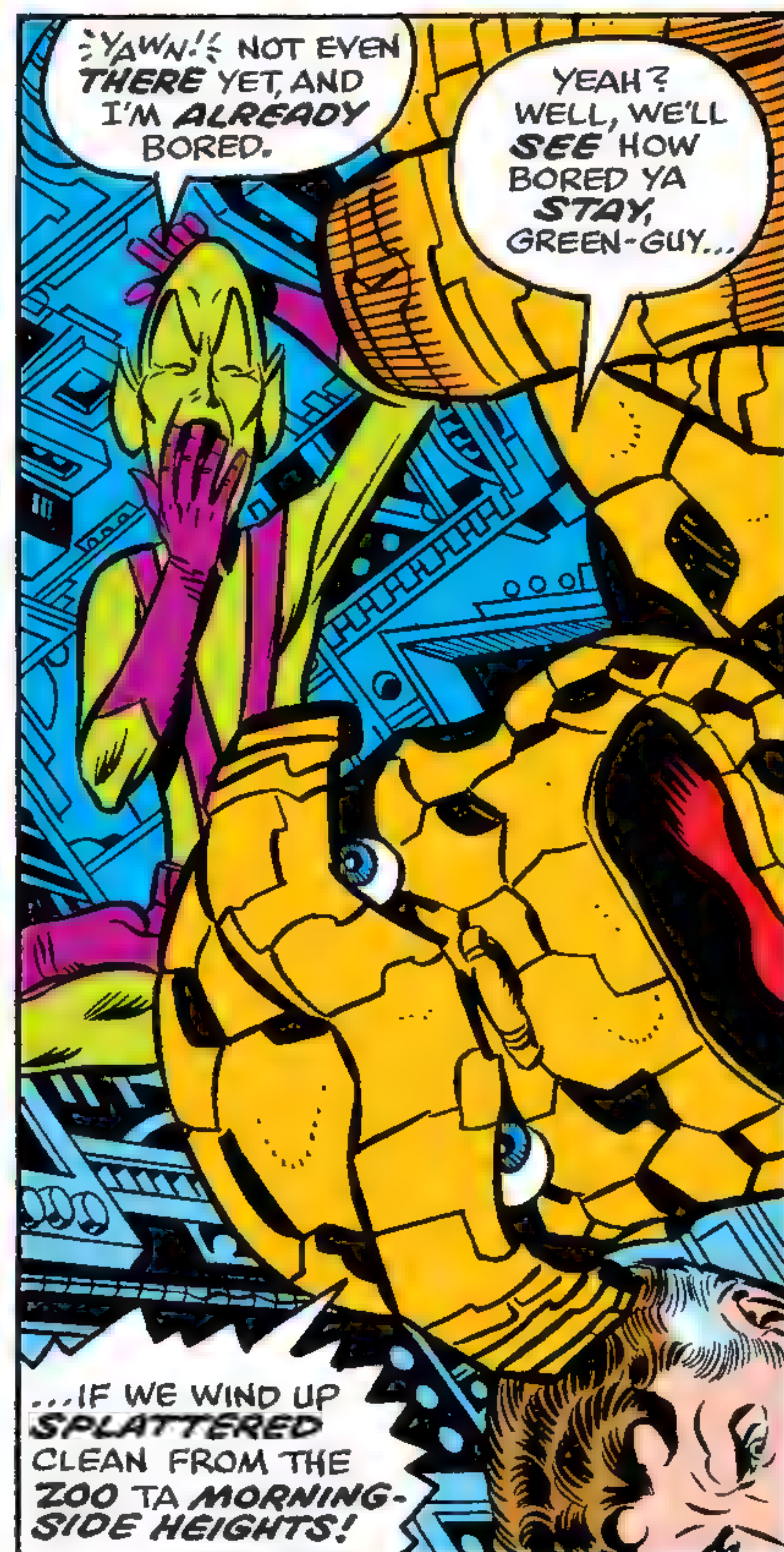
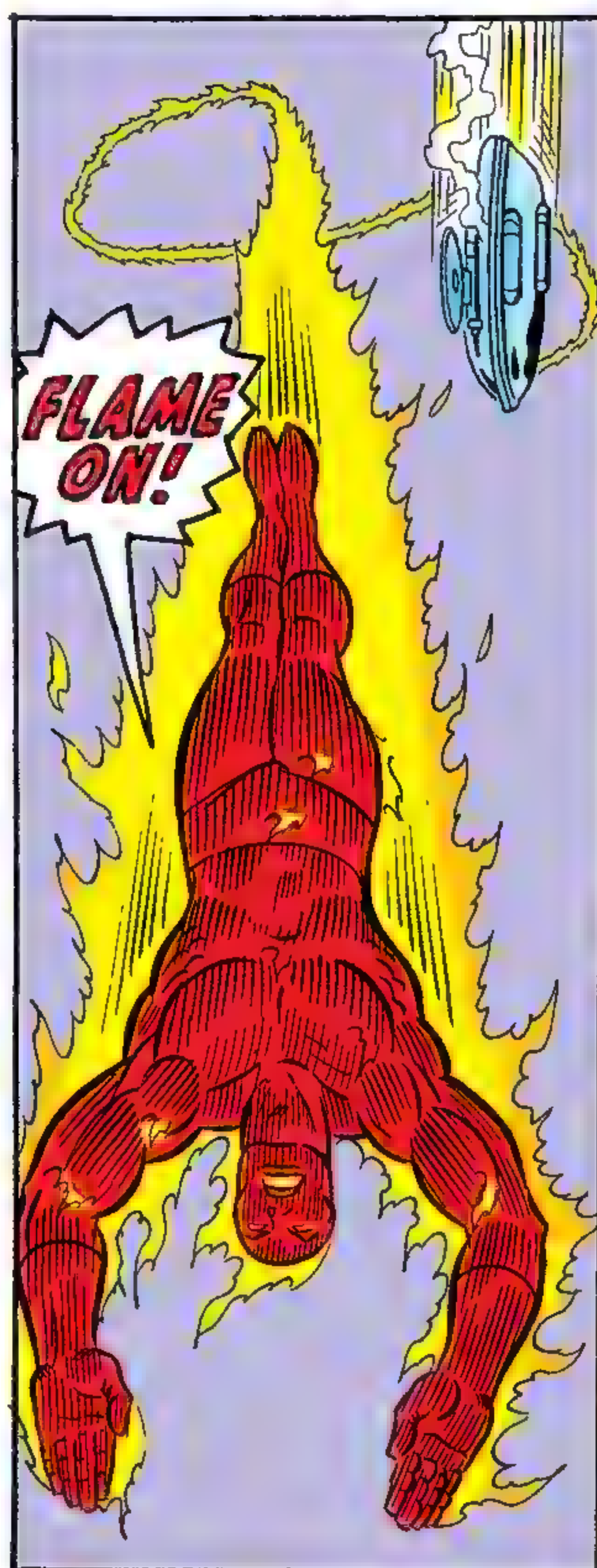
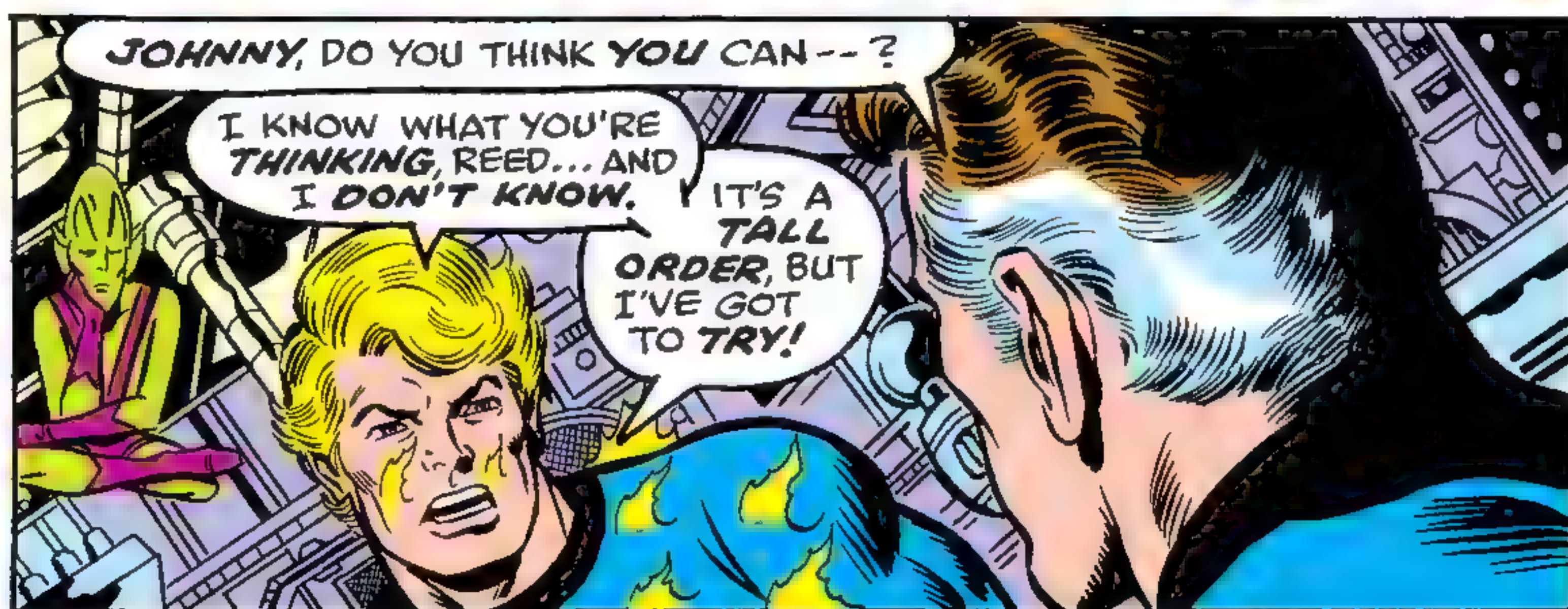
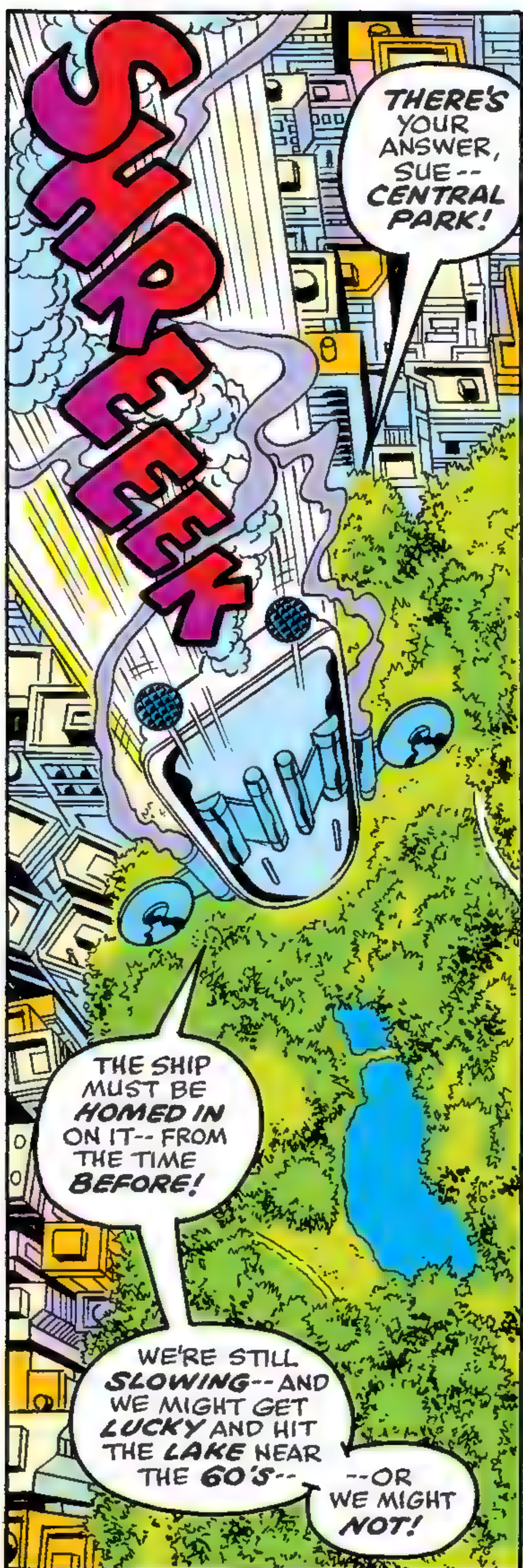
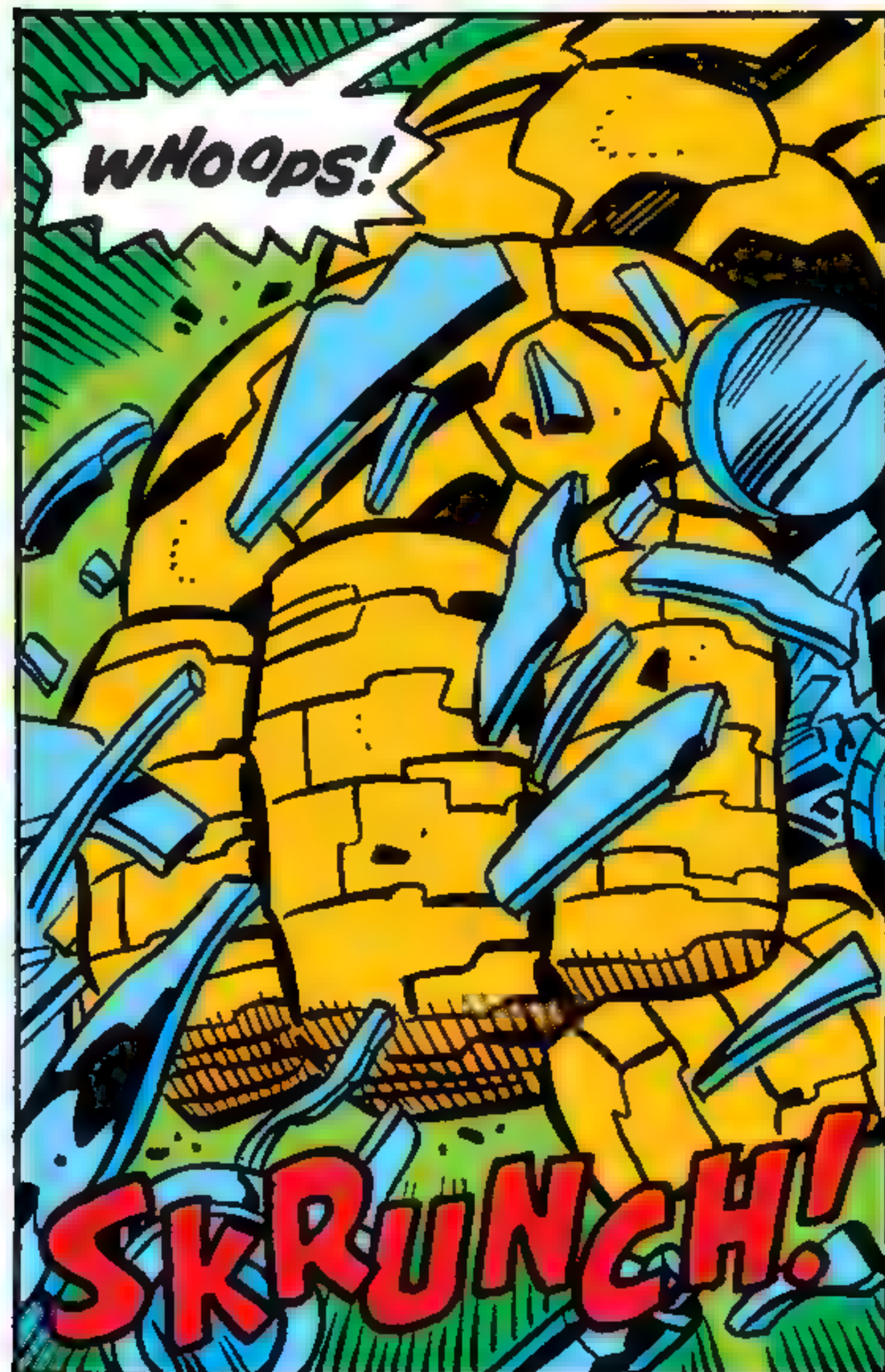
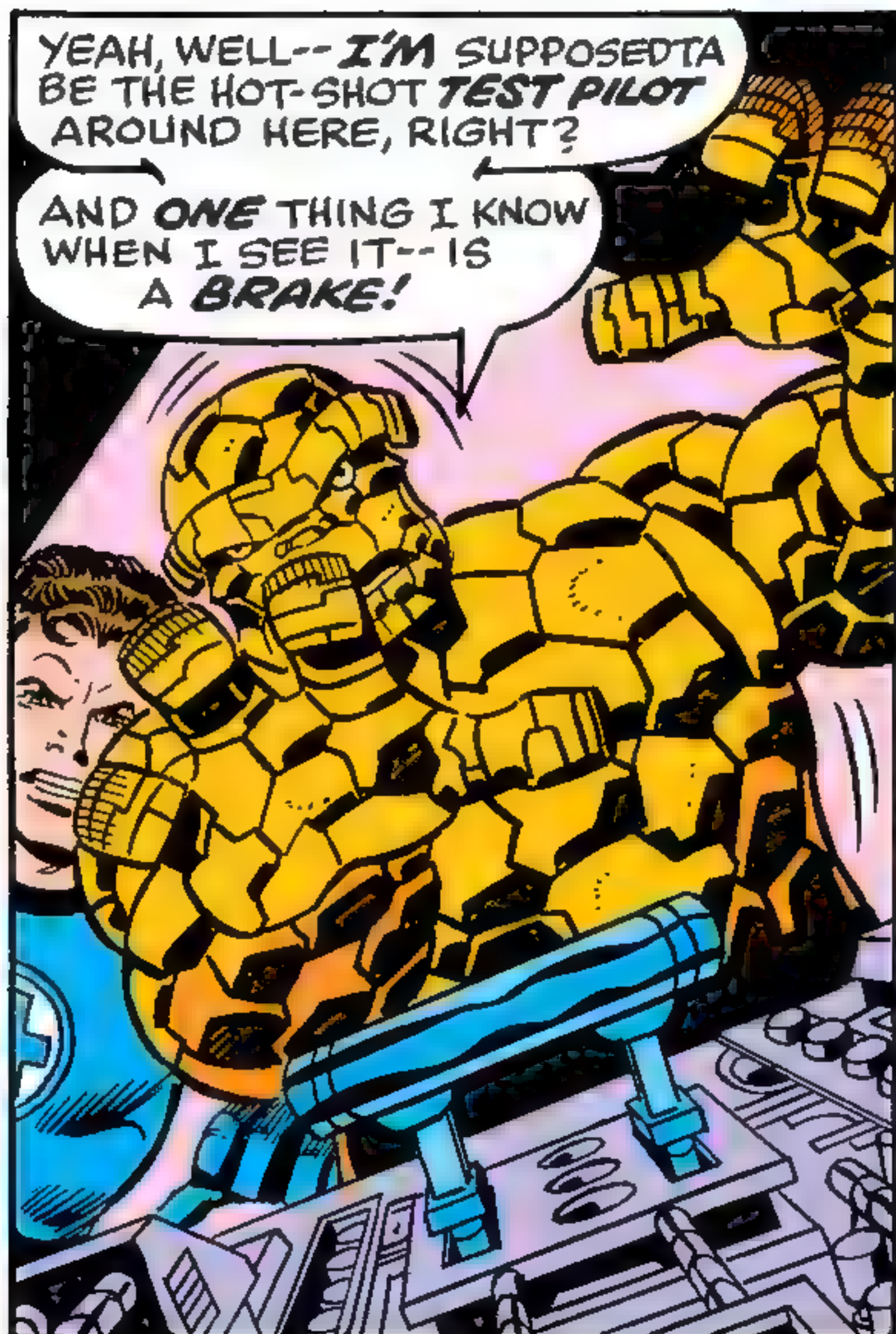


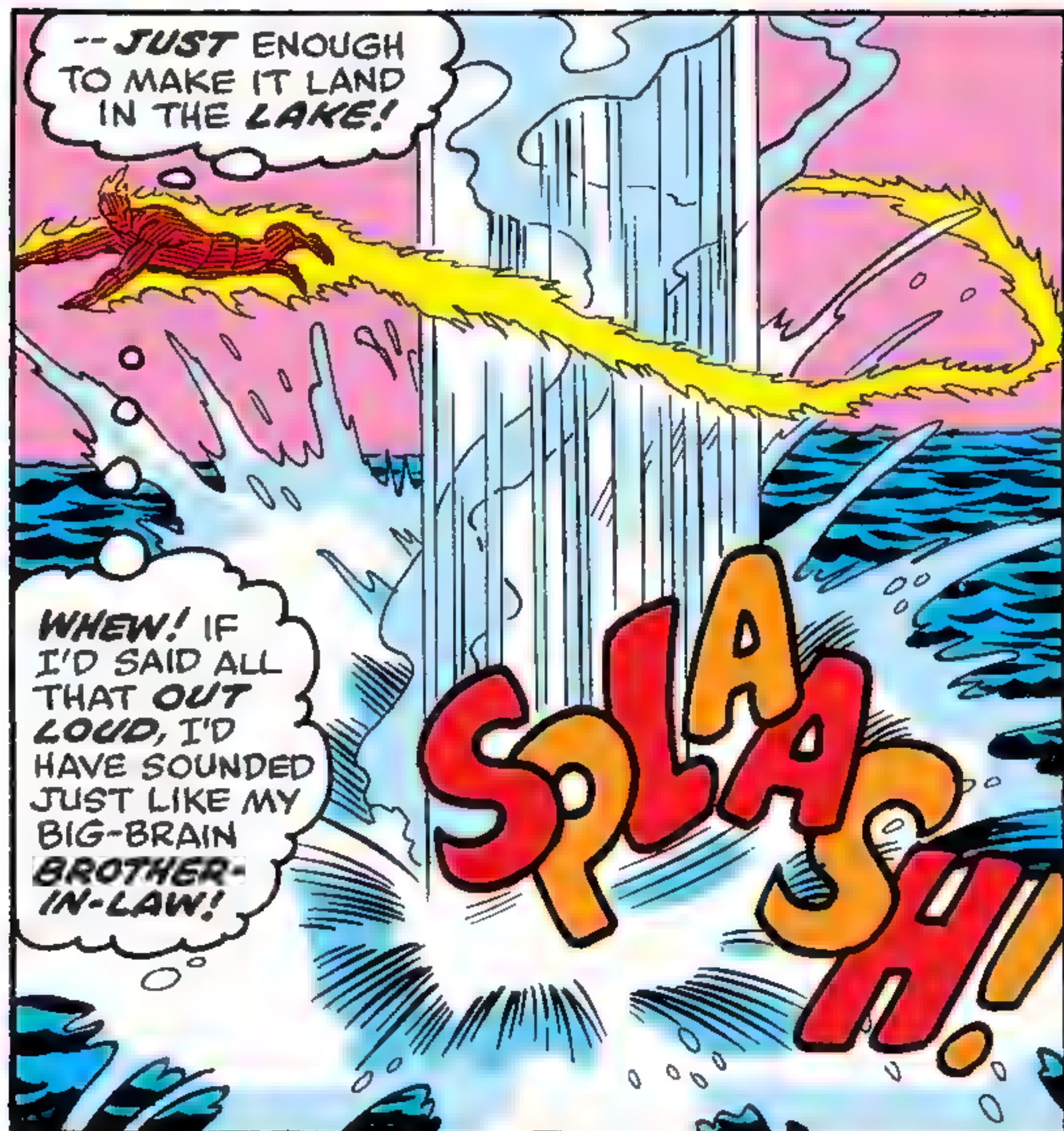
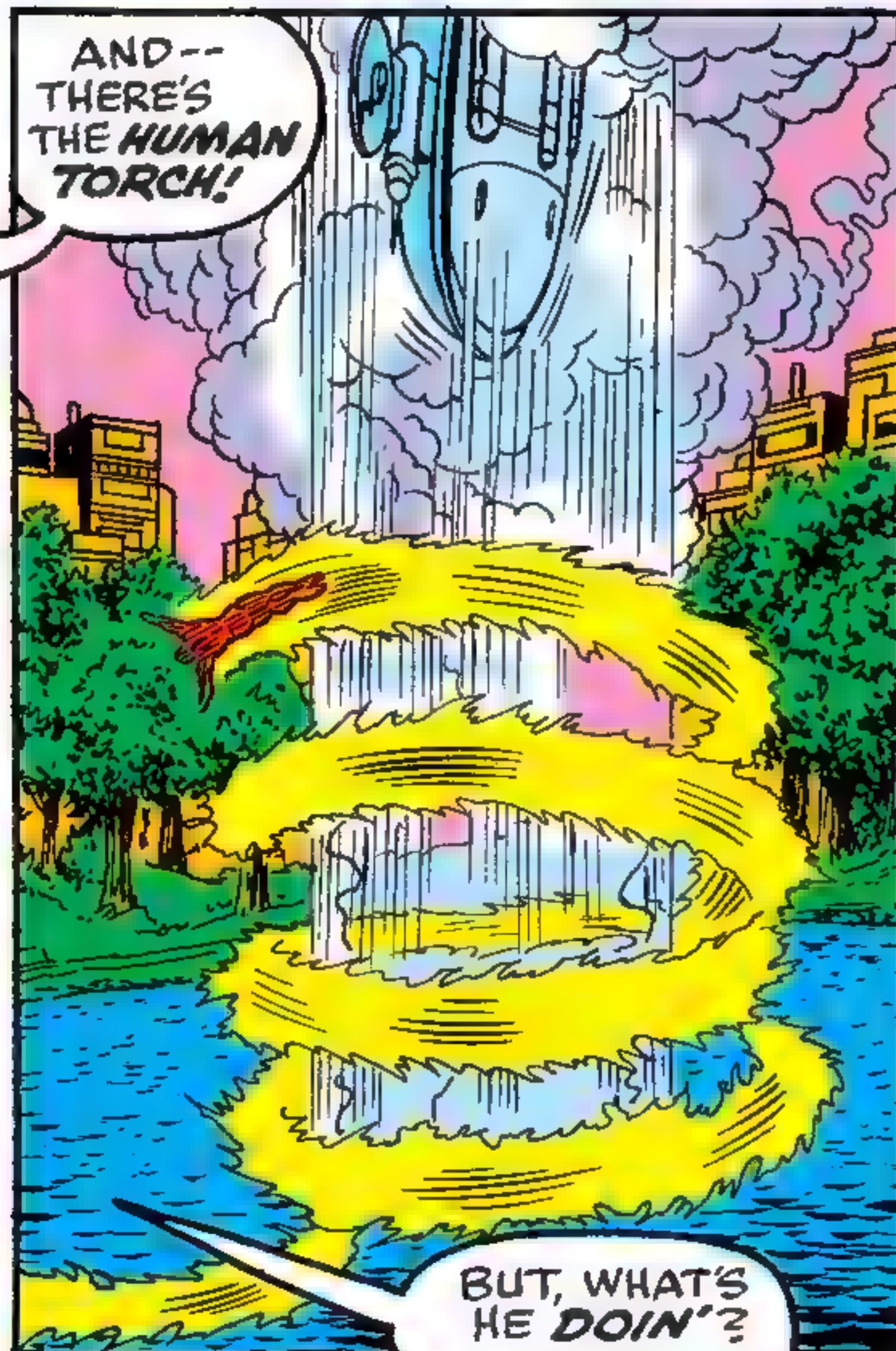
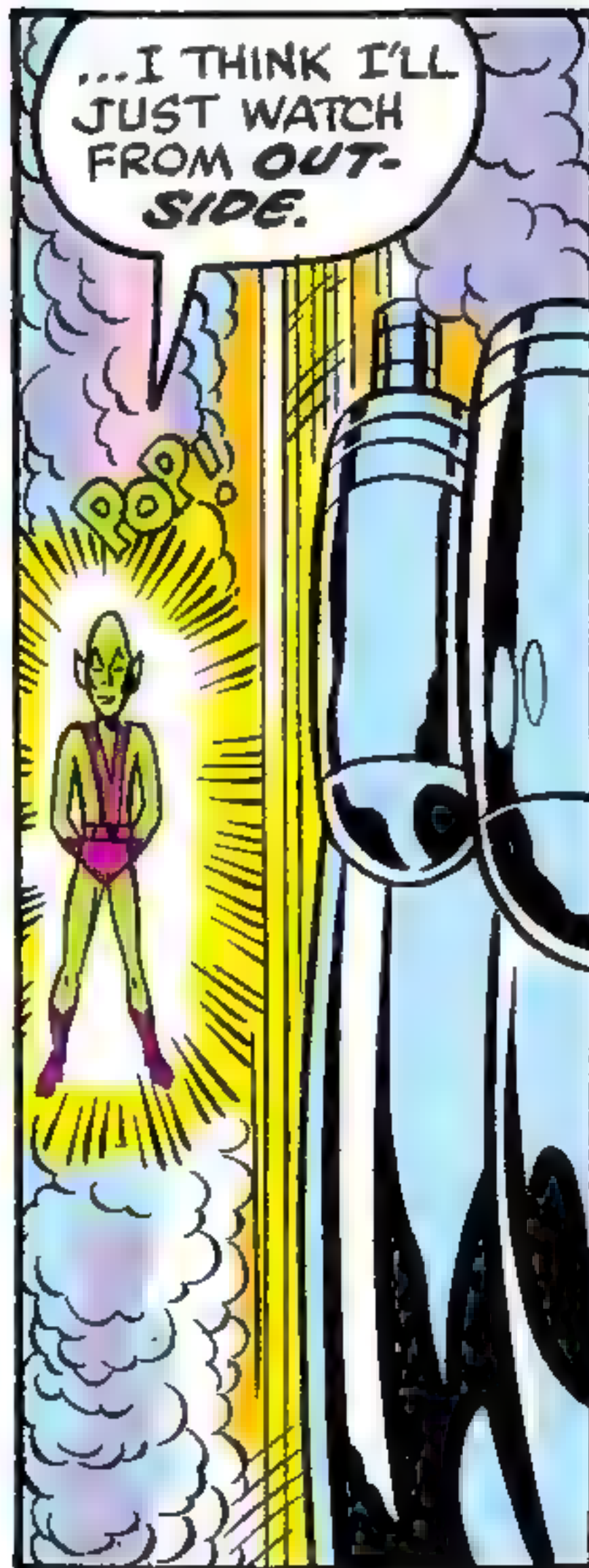
REED--THE EARTH! IT'S COMING UP FAR FASTER THAN WE'D EXPECTED!

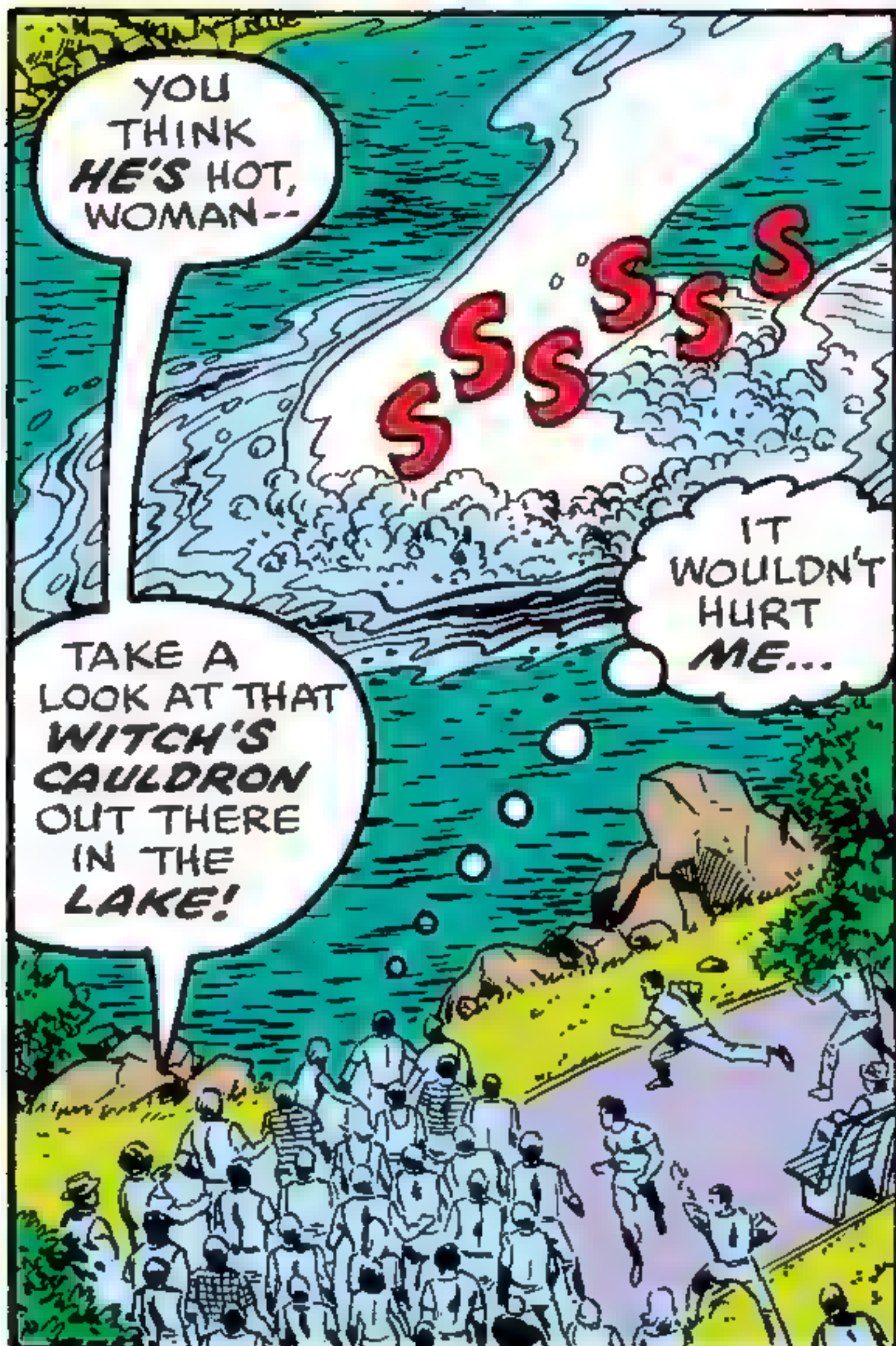
THAT'S BECAUSE THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY'S SHIP RUNS ON TACHYON POWER, JOHNNY.

AS LONG AS THAT'S IN FORCE, IT CAN'T GO SLOWER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT!

IF WE DON'T SLOW HER DOWN QUICKLY TO NORMAL ROCKET SPEED-- WE'LL CRASH INTO THE EARTH IN SECONDS!







YOU THINK HE'S HOT, WOMAN--

TAKE A LOOK AT THAT WITCH'S CAULDRON OUT THERE IN THE LAKE!

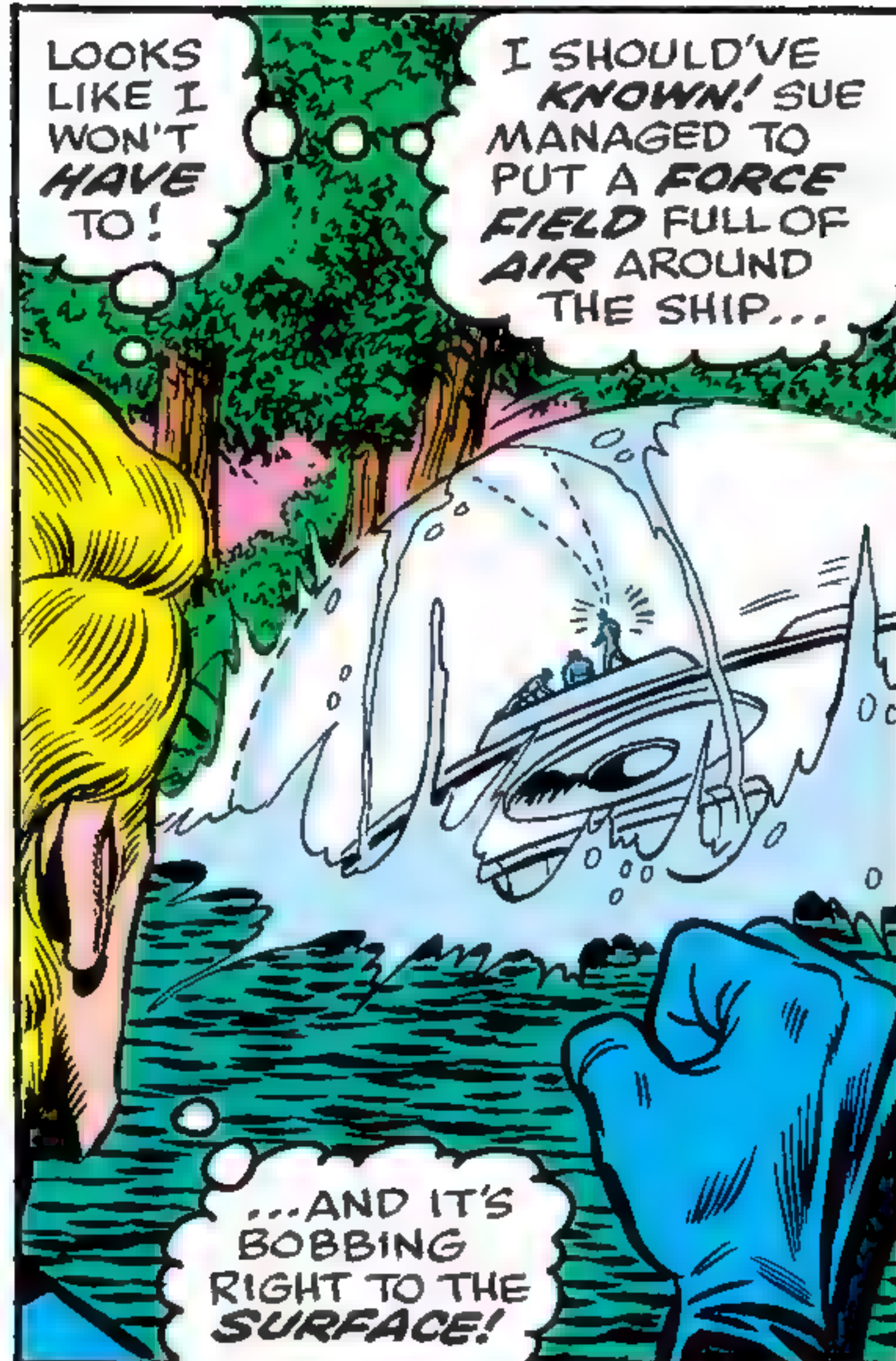
IT WOULDN'T HURT ME...



THE ONLY QUESTION IS, I'M SO WINDED... CAN I TAKE A DEEP ENOUGH BREATH TO GET TO SUE AND THE OTHERS... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE?

WAIT A MINUTE--!

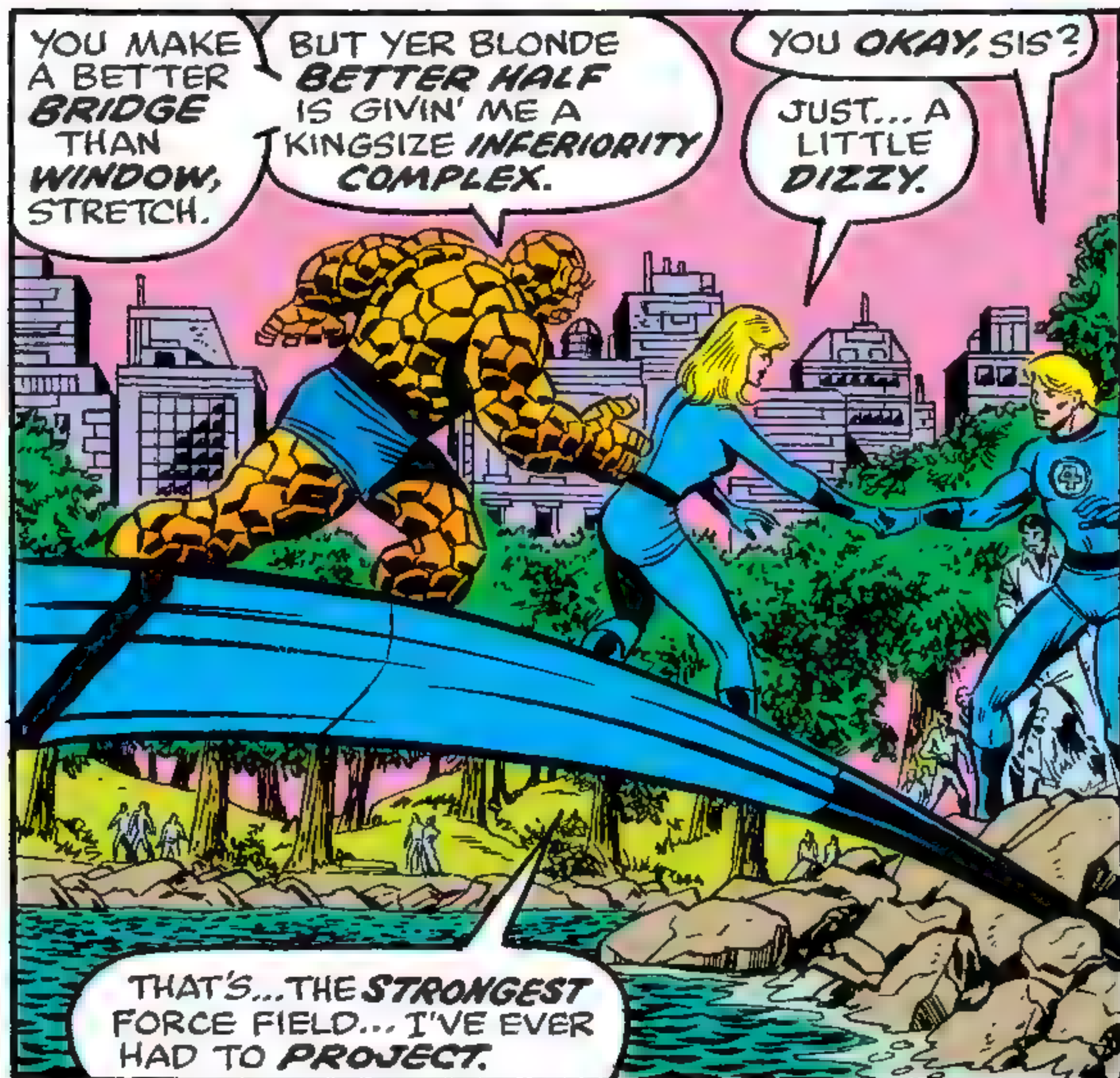
POP!



LOOKS LIKE I WON'T HAVE TO!

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN! SUE MANAGED TO PUT A FORCE FIELD FULL OF AIR AROUND THE SHIP...

...AND IT'S BOBBING RIGHT TO THE SURFACE!



YOU MAKE A BETTER BRIDGE THAN WINDOW, STRETCH.

BUT YER BLONDE BETTER HALF IS GIVIN' ME A KINGSIZE INFERIORITY COMPLEX.

YOU OKAY, SIS?

JUST... A LITTLE DIZZY.

THAT'S... THE STRONGEST FORCE FIELD... I'VE EVER HAD TO PROJECT.



WHY, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE AS BORING AS I FEARED.

ON EARTH ONLY A FEW MINUTES, AND ALREADY WE'VE HAD-- WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?-- A CRASH LANDING!

CLAP!



LEMME AT 'IM, REED! S'HELP ME, I'LL MOW 'IM DOWN!

EASY, BIG FELLA. REMEMBER-- HE SAVED THE WHOLE EARTH!

YEAH... AN' I GOT A FEELIN' HE AIN'T EVER GONNA LET US FORGET IT.



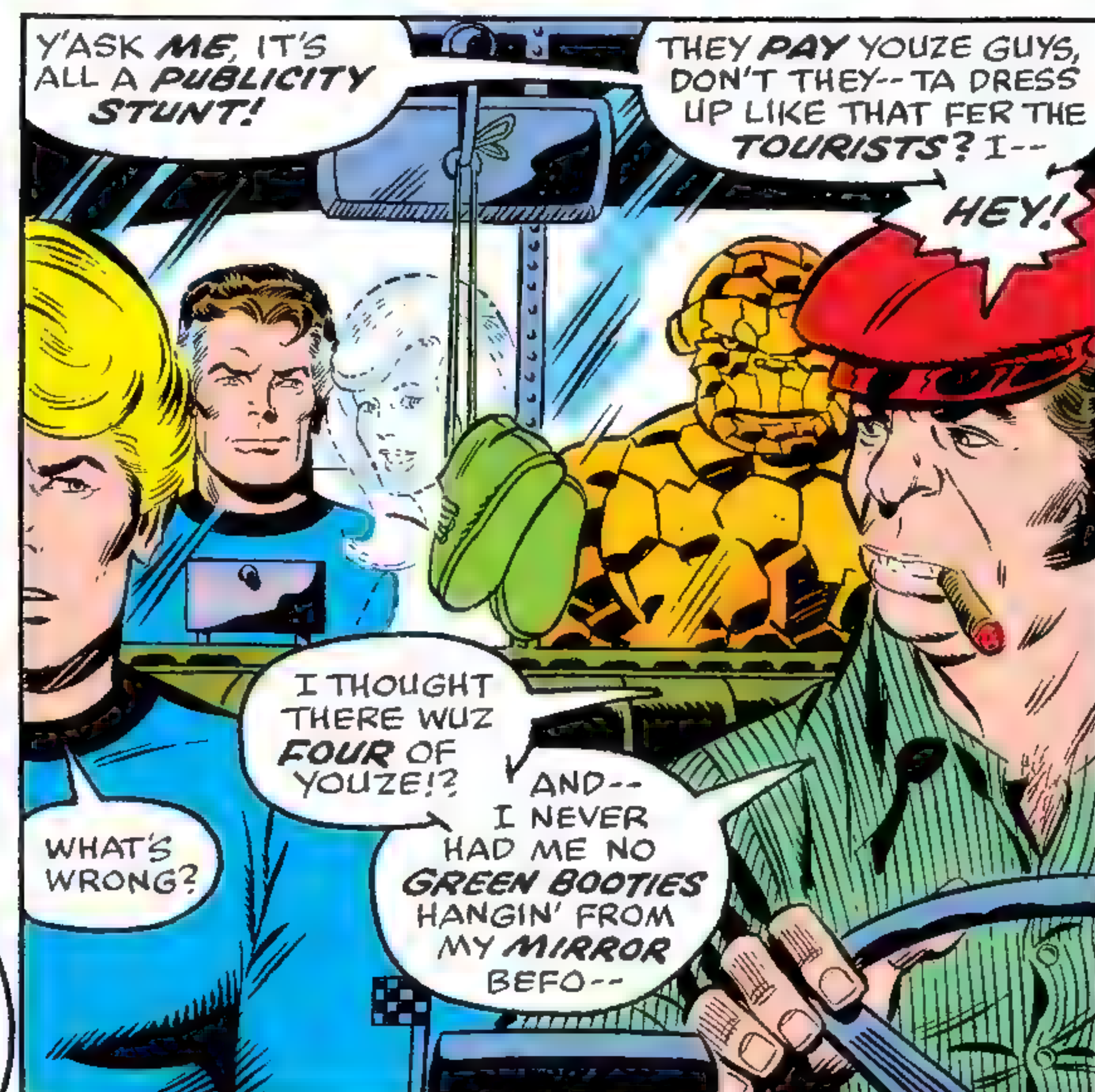
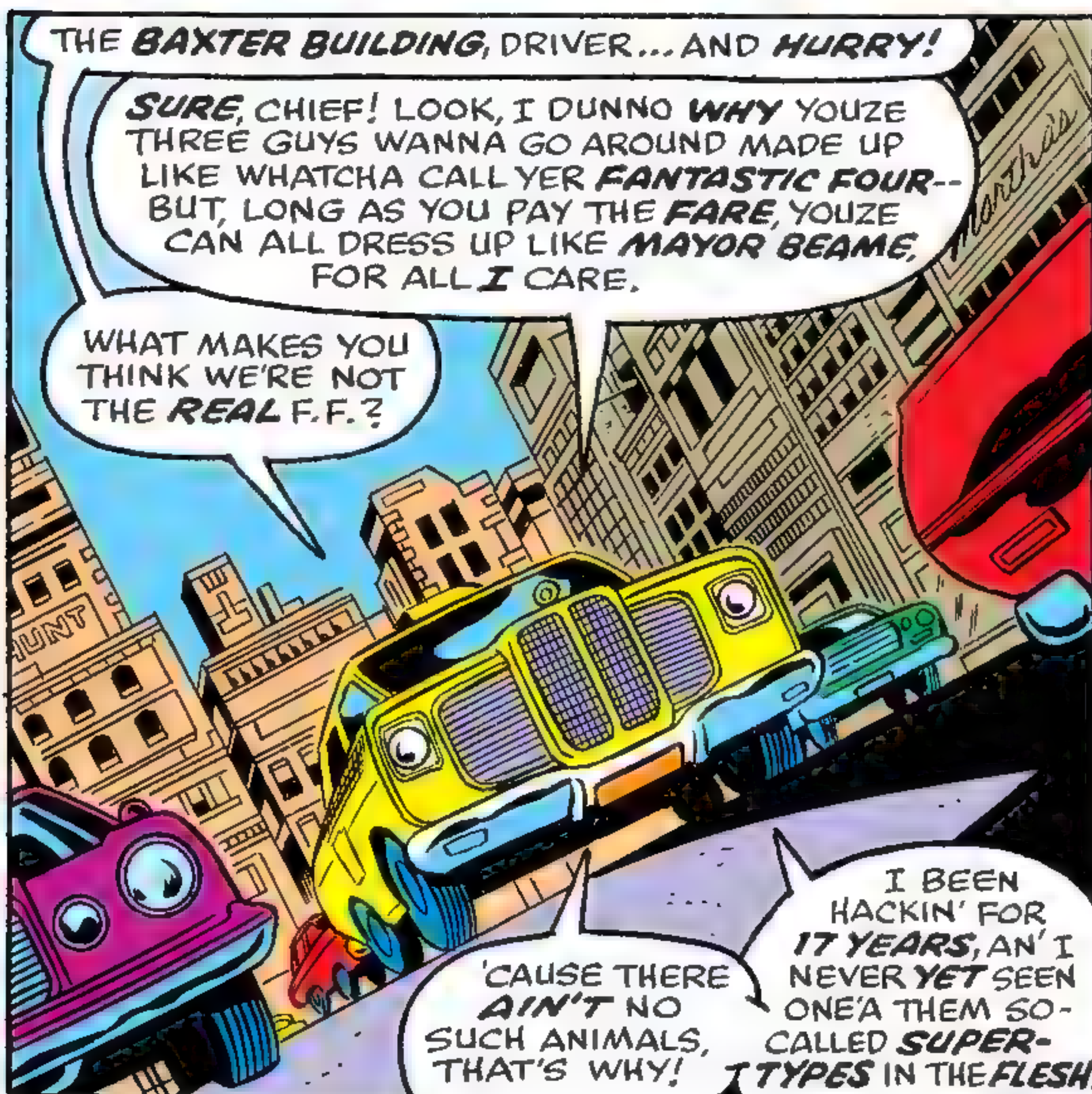
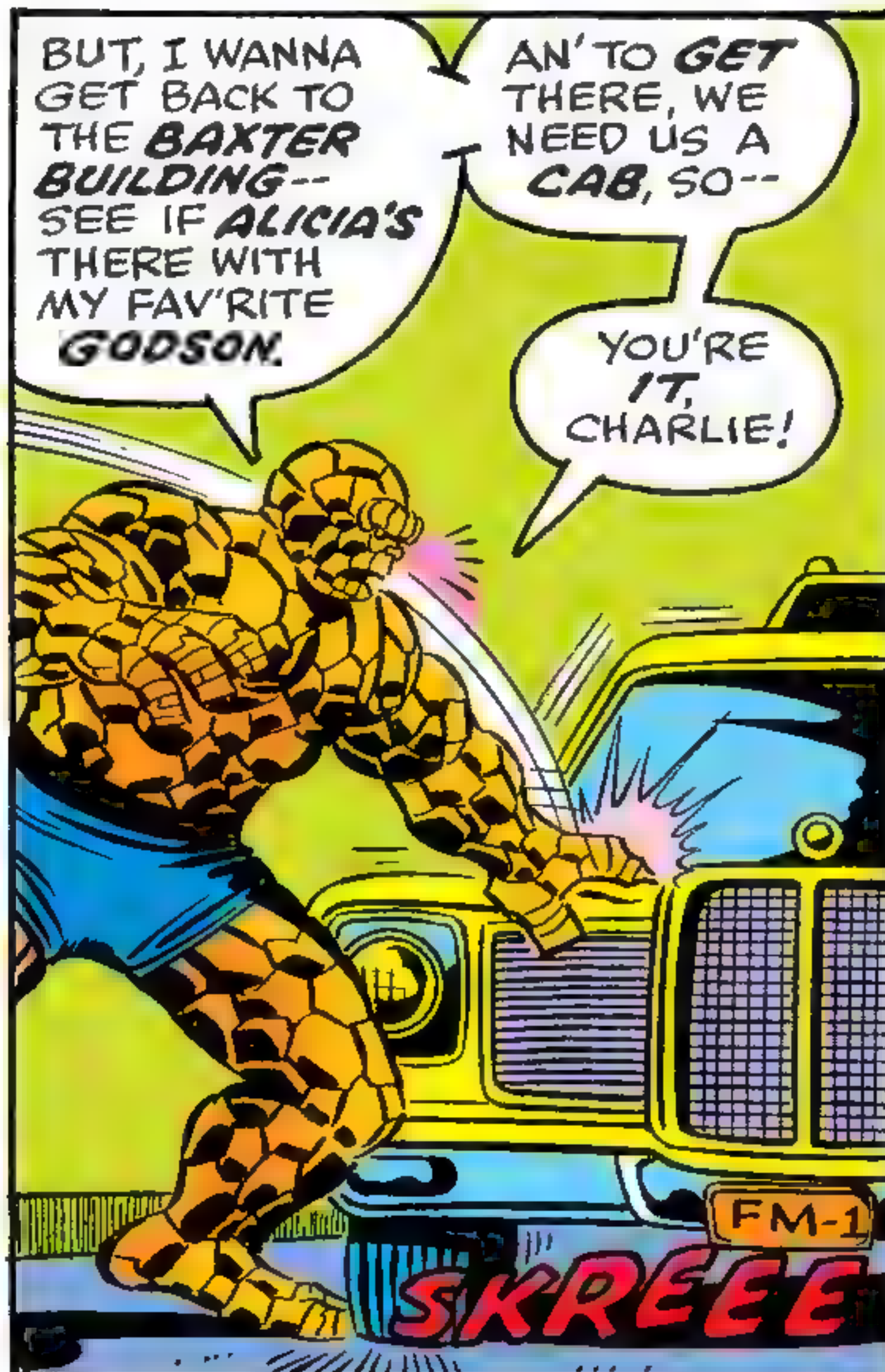
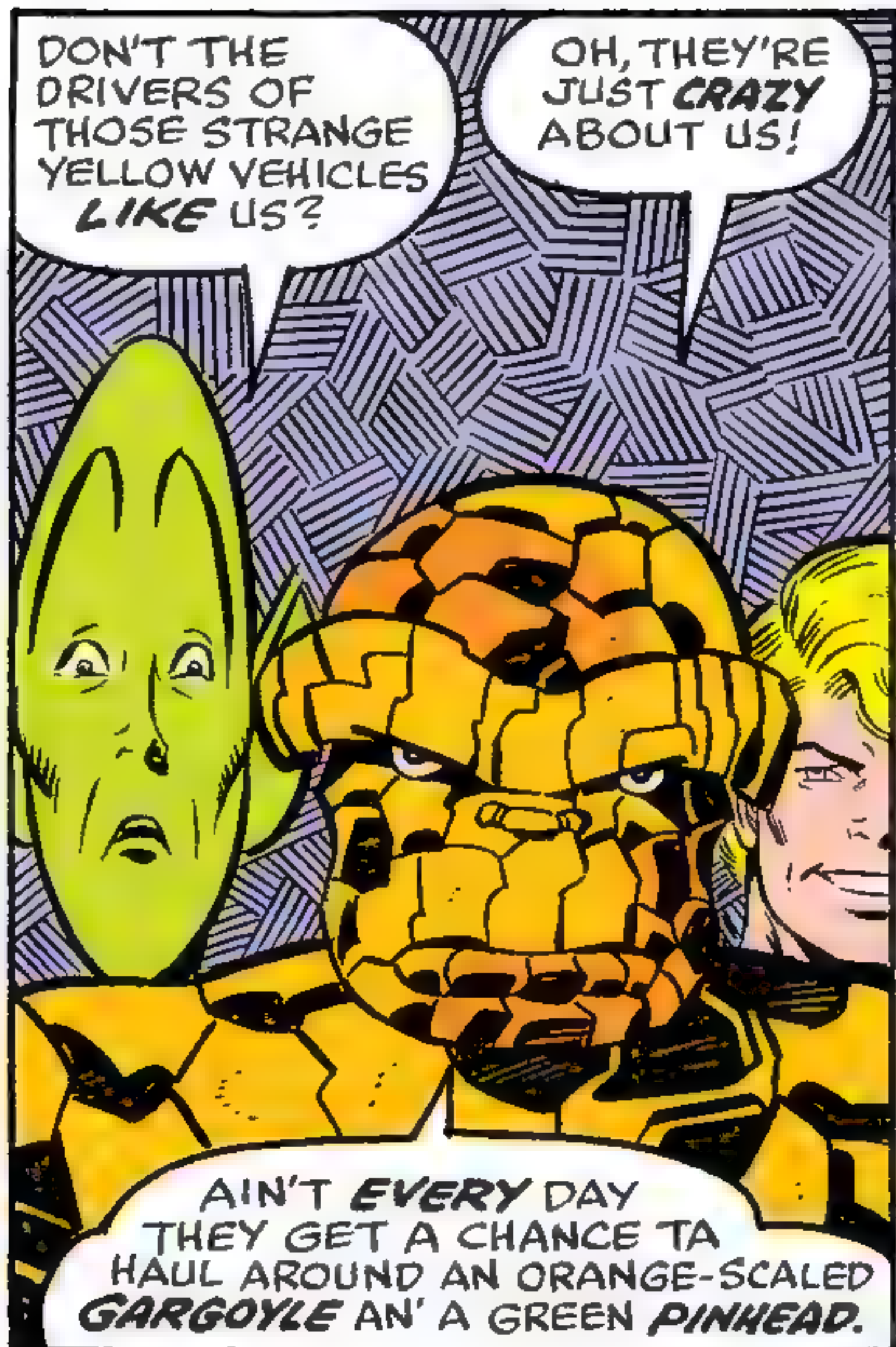
WELL, ANYWAY... HERE WE ARE BACK IN FUN CITY.

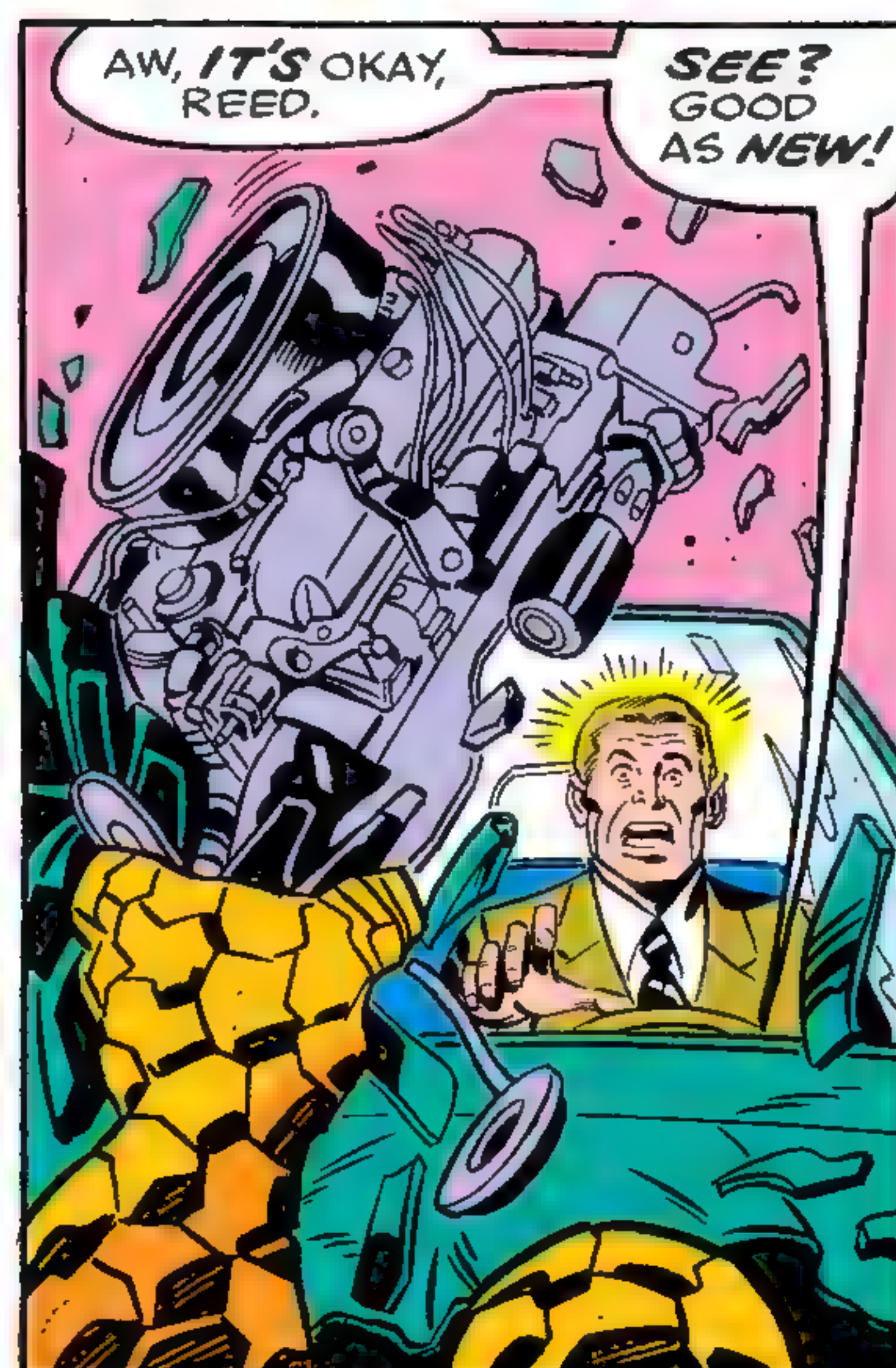
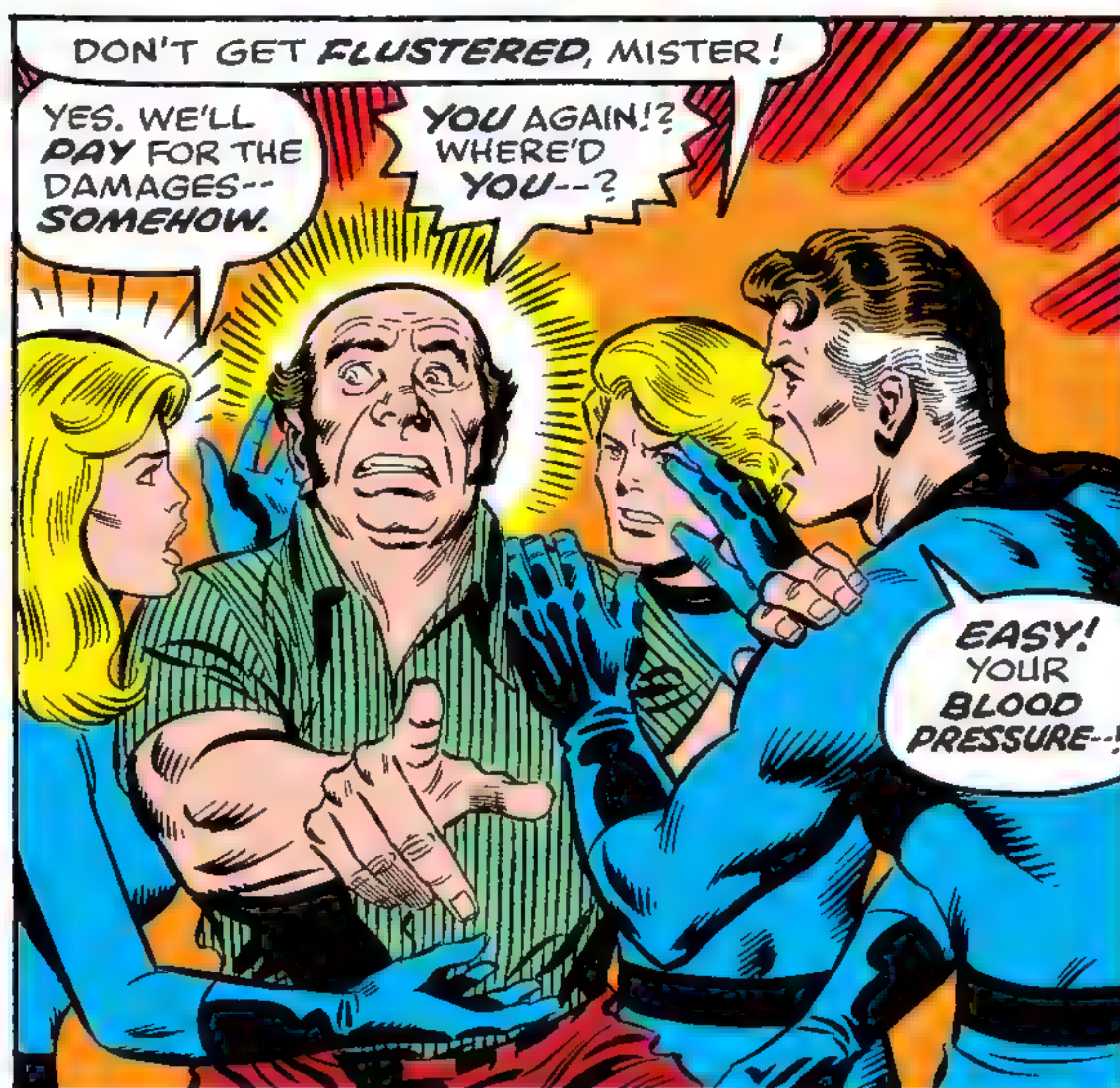
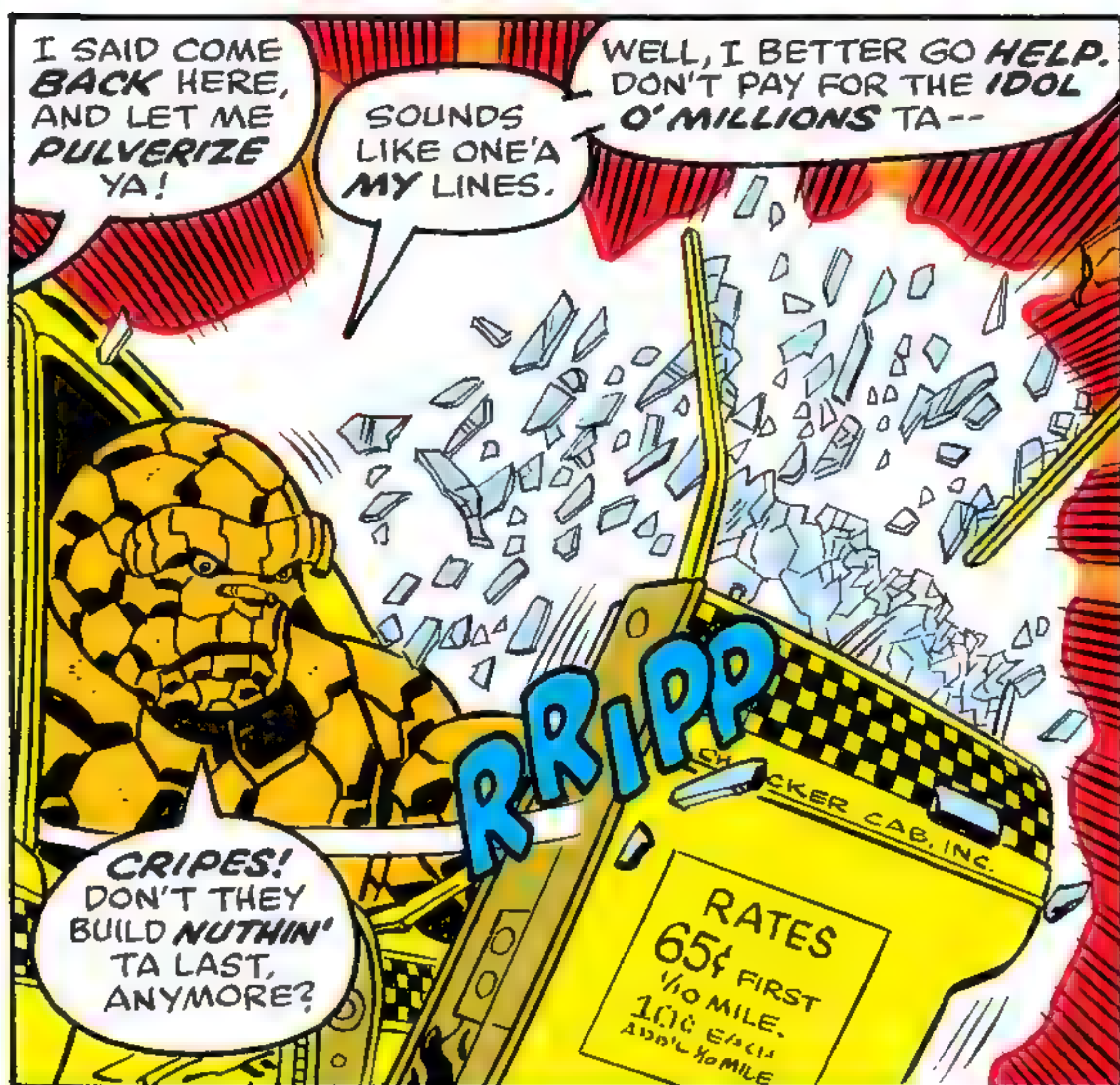
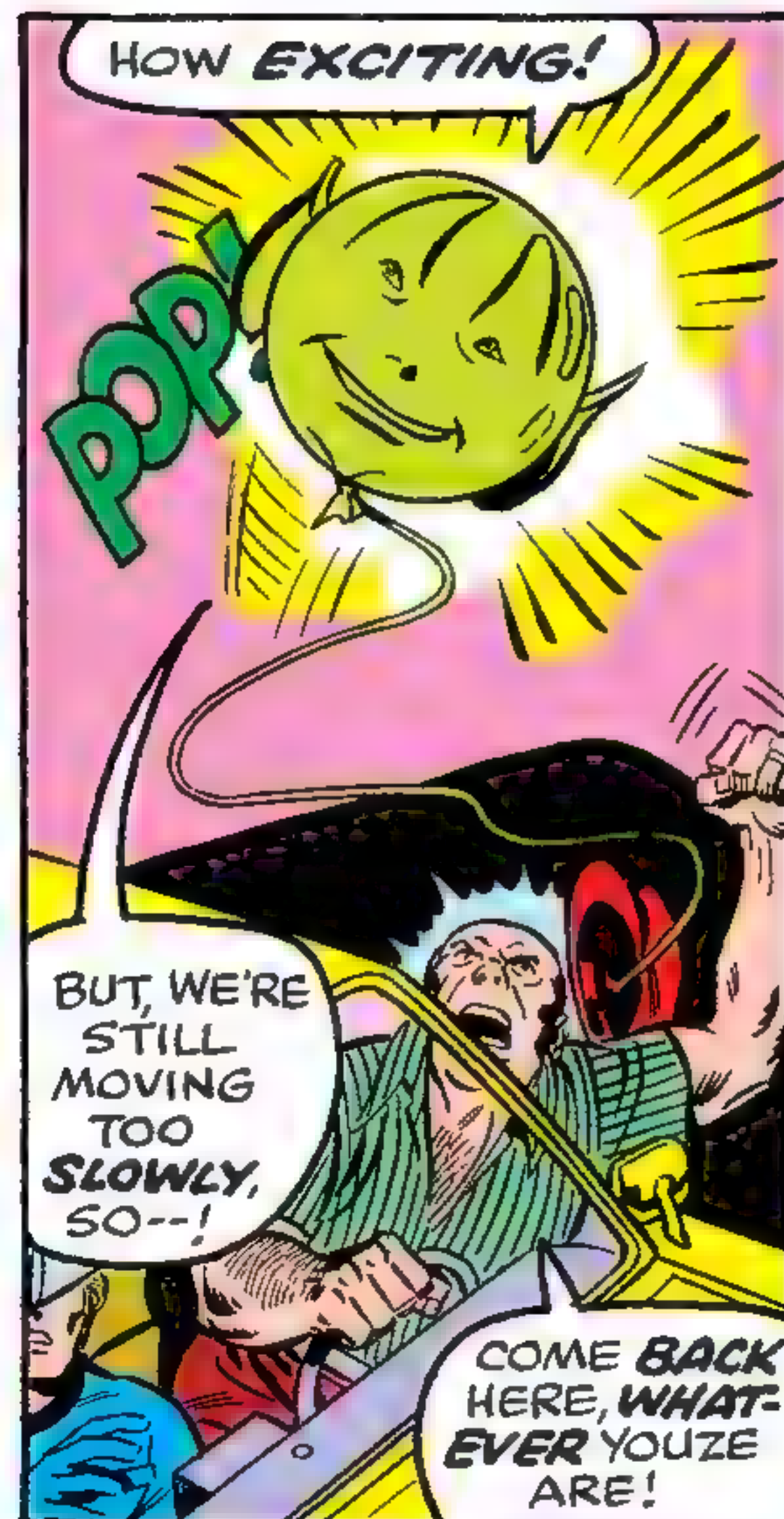
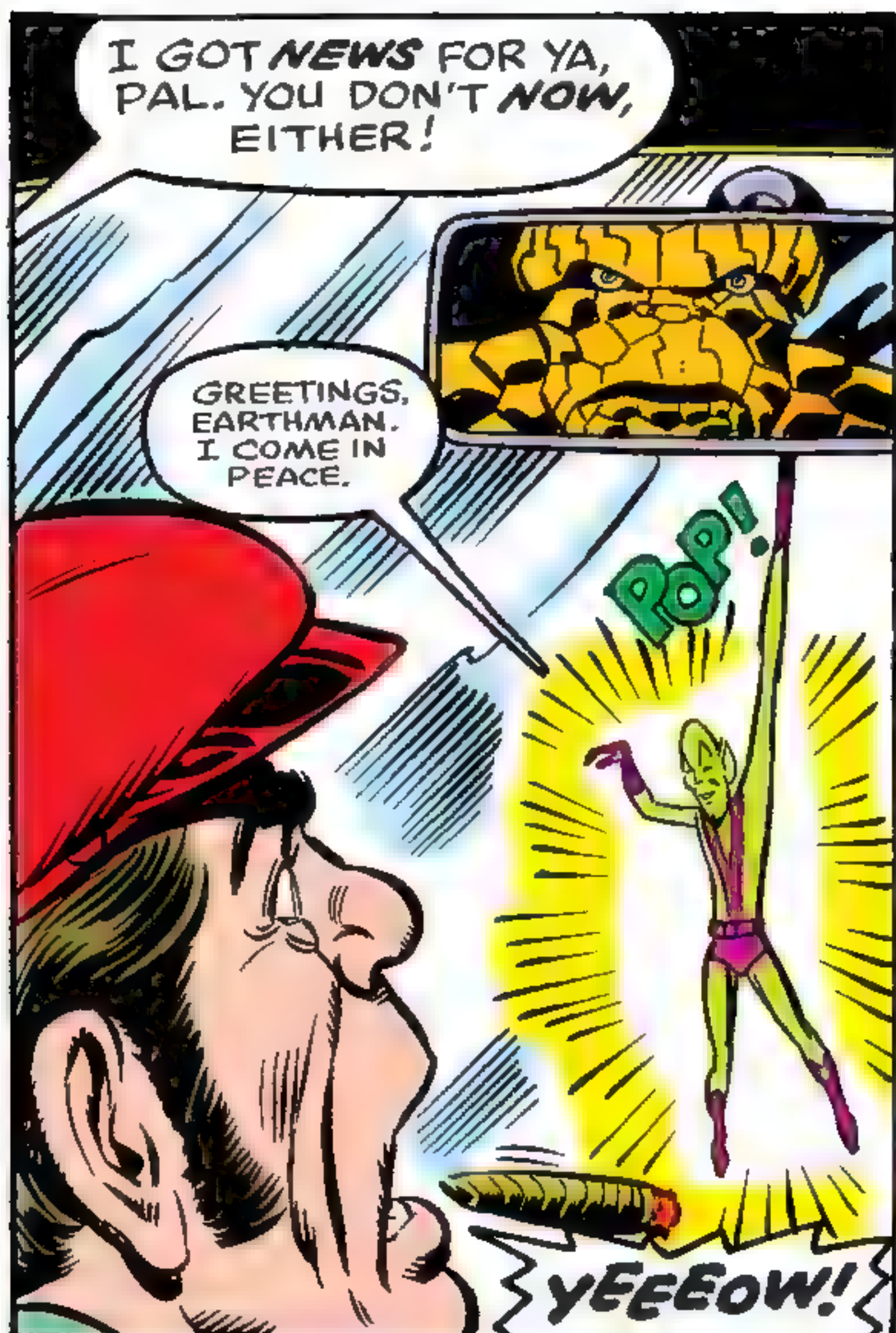
KINDA CHOKES YOU UP, DON'T IT-- SPECIALLY THE POLLUTION.

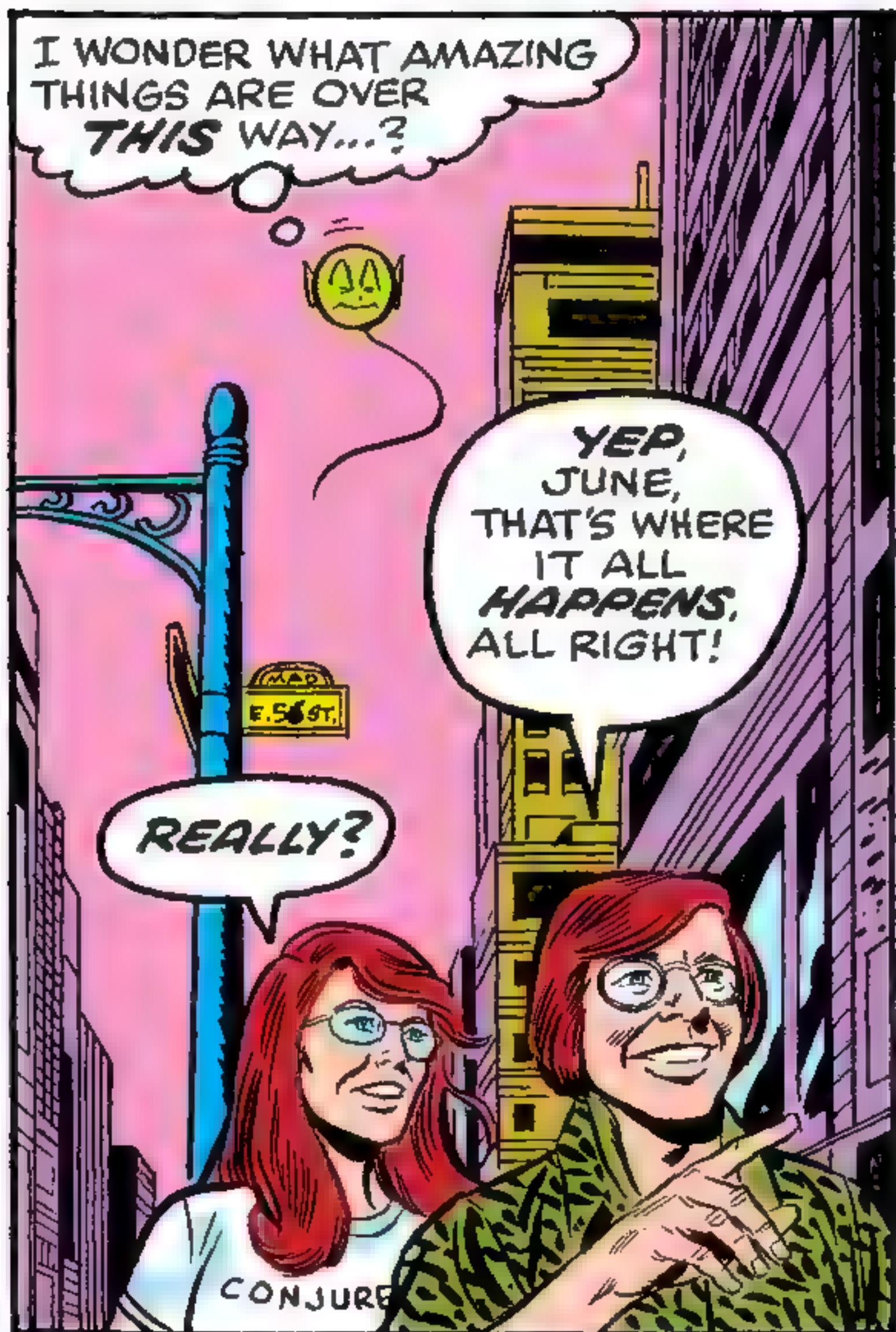


HEY, TAXI! TAXI!

BLAST! THAT WUZ THE LAST CHECKERED CAB IN SIGHT-- AN' THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES IN TOWN THAT CARRY MORE'N FOUR PASSENGERS AT ONE TIME.







I WONDER WHAT AMAZING THINGS ARE OVER **THIS** WAY...?

YEP, JUNE, THAT'S WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS, ALL RIGHT!

REALLY?

CONJURE



SURE, MARVEL COMICS IS LOCATED IN THIS VERY BUILDING!

SPIDEY-- THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- THE WHOLE FREAKY BUNCH OF 'EM--

575



--BEST COMIC-BOOKS IN THE WHOLE WORLD, RIGHT UP THERE ON THE **SIXTH** FLOOR!

"COMIC-BOOKS"?

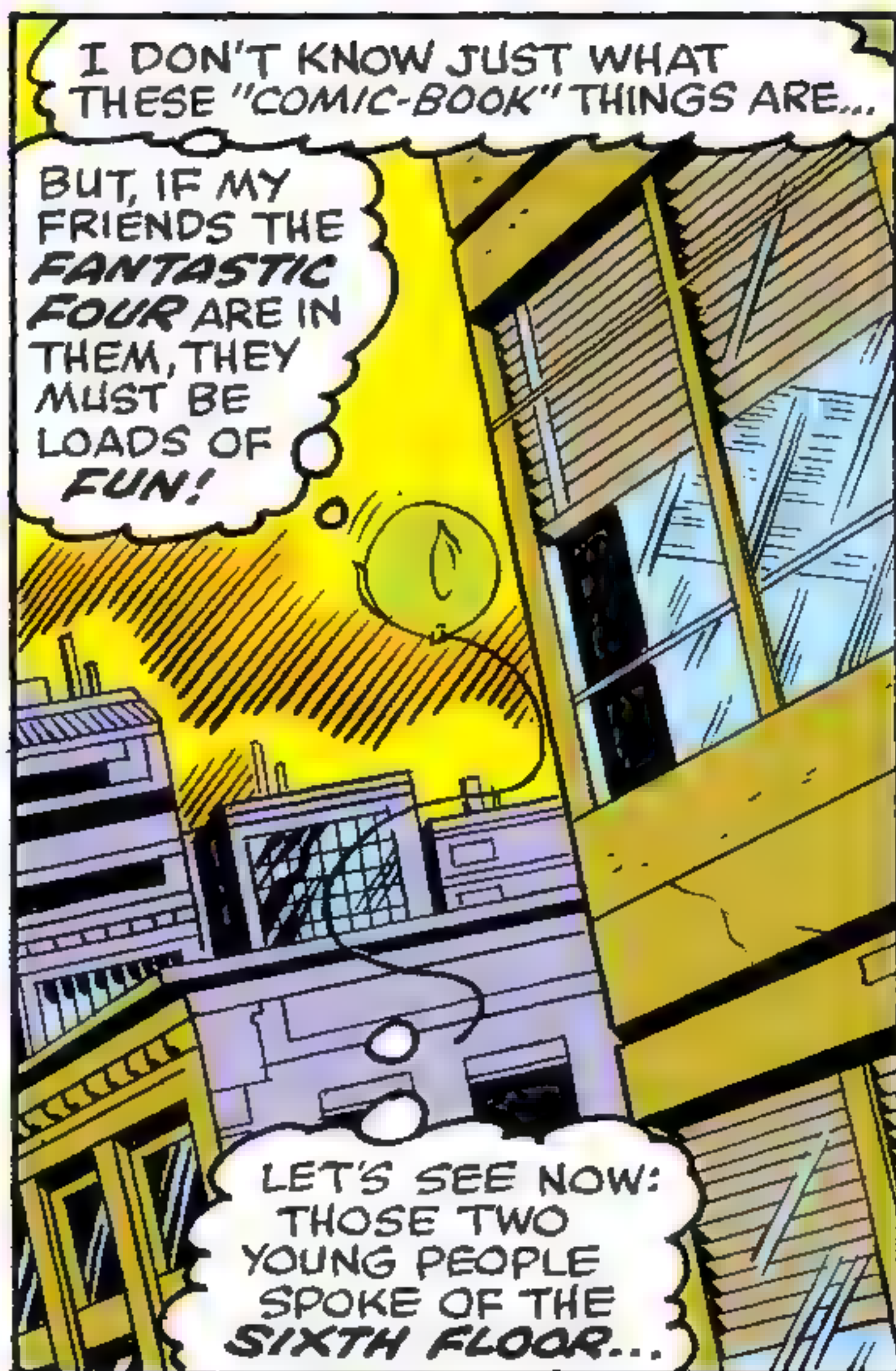


...WELL, WE GOT **THAT** SETTLED-- THOUGH WHERE WE'LL GET THE **MONEY** TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING, I DON'T--

JUST ABOUT **NOW**, REED, THAT MAY BE THE **LEAST** OF OUR PROBLEMS!

WHAT ARE Y-- OH NO!

OH YES!



I DON'T KNOW JUST WHAT THESE "COMIC-BOOK" THINGS ARE...

BUT, IF MY FRIENDS THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE IN THEM, THEY MUST BE LOADS OF **FUN**!

LET'S SEE NOW: THOSE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE SPOKE OF THE **SIXTH FLOOR**...



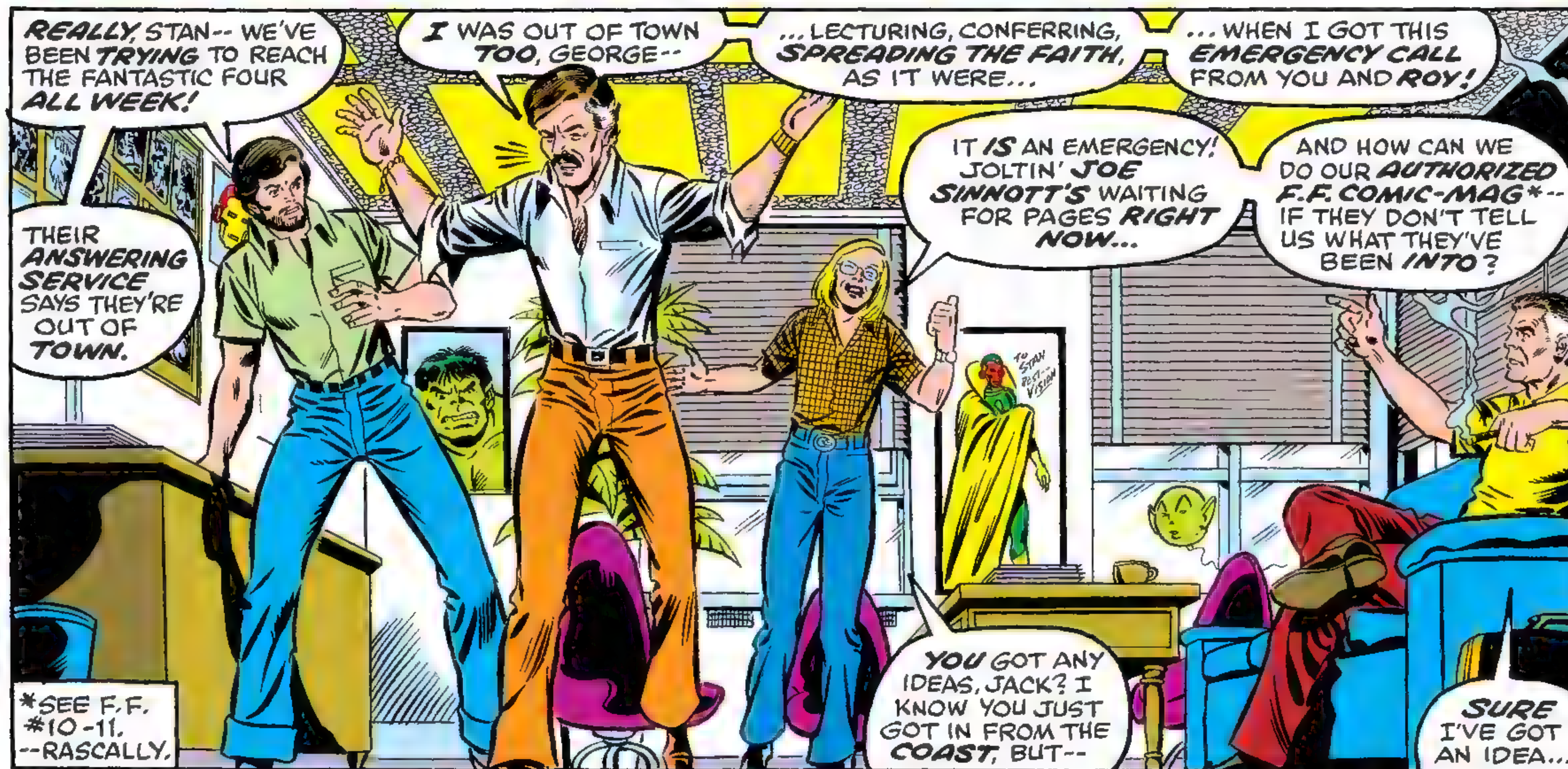
...AND THIS MUST BE **IT**.

UGH! WHAT **DRAB** COSTUMES THOSE FOLKS ARE WEARING!

NOW YOU TELL ME! NOW YOU TELL ME!

BUT **STAN**--!

"STAN"? WHAT IS A "STAN"?



REALLY, STAN-- WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH THE FANTASTIC FOUR ALL WEEK!

I WAS OUT OF TOWN TOO, GEORGE--

...LECTURING, CONFERRING, SPREADING THE FAITH, AS IT WERE...

... WHEN I GOT THIS EMERGENCY CALL FROM YOU AND ROY!

THEIR ANSWERING SERVICE SAYS THEY'RE OUT OF TOWN.

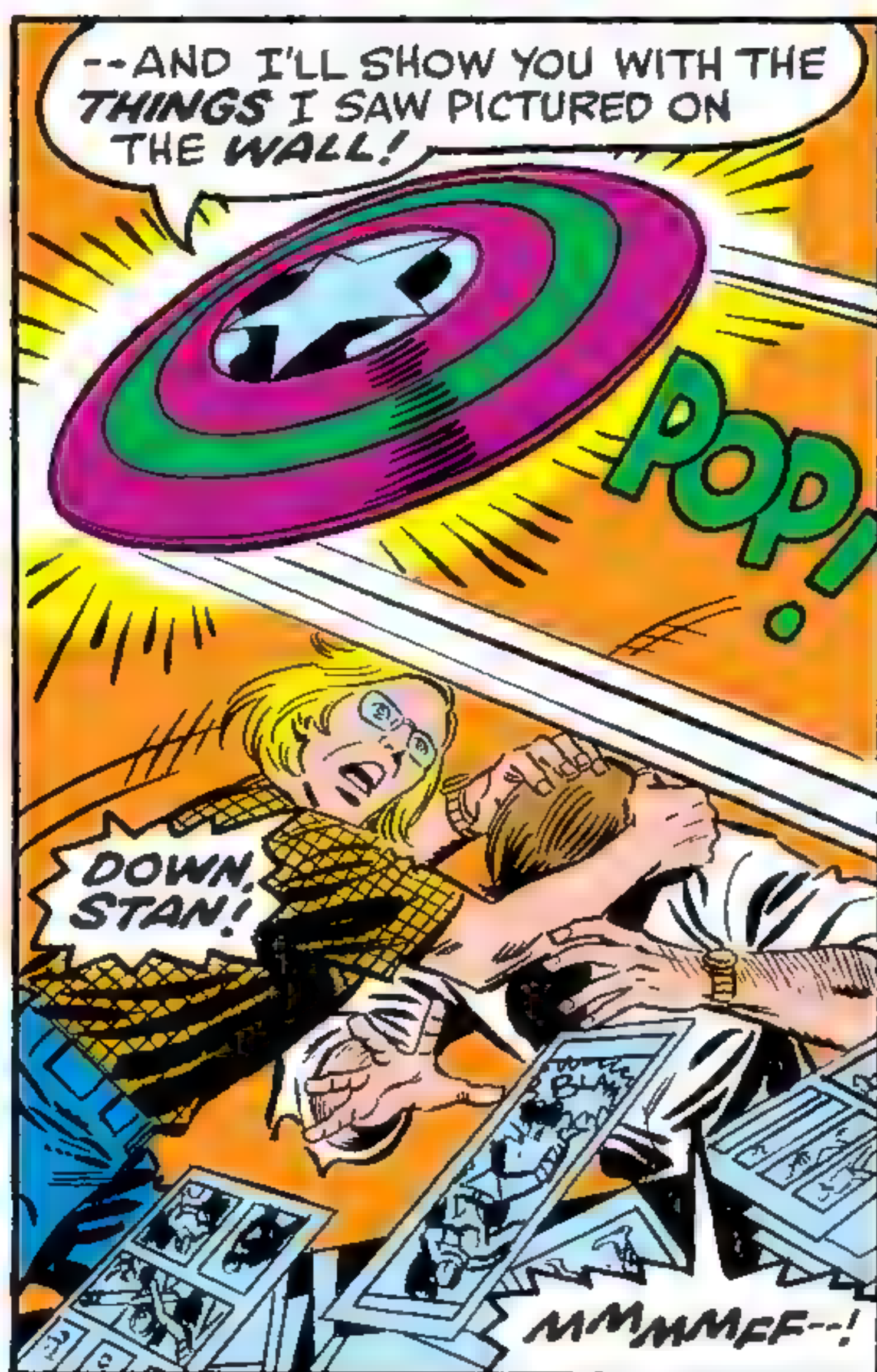
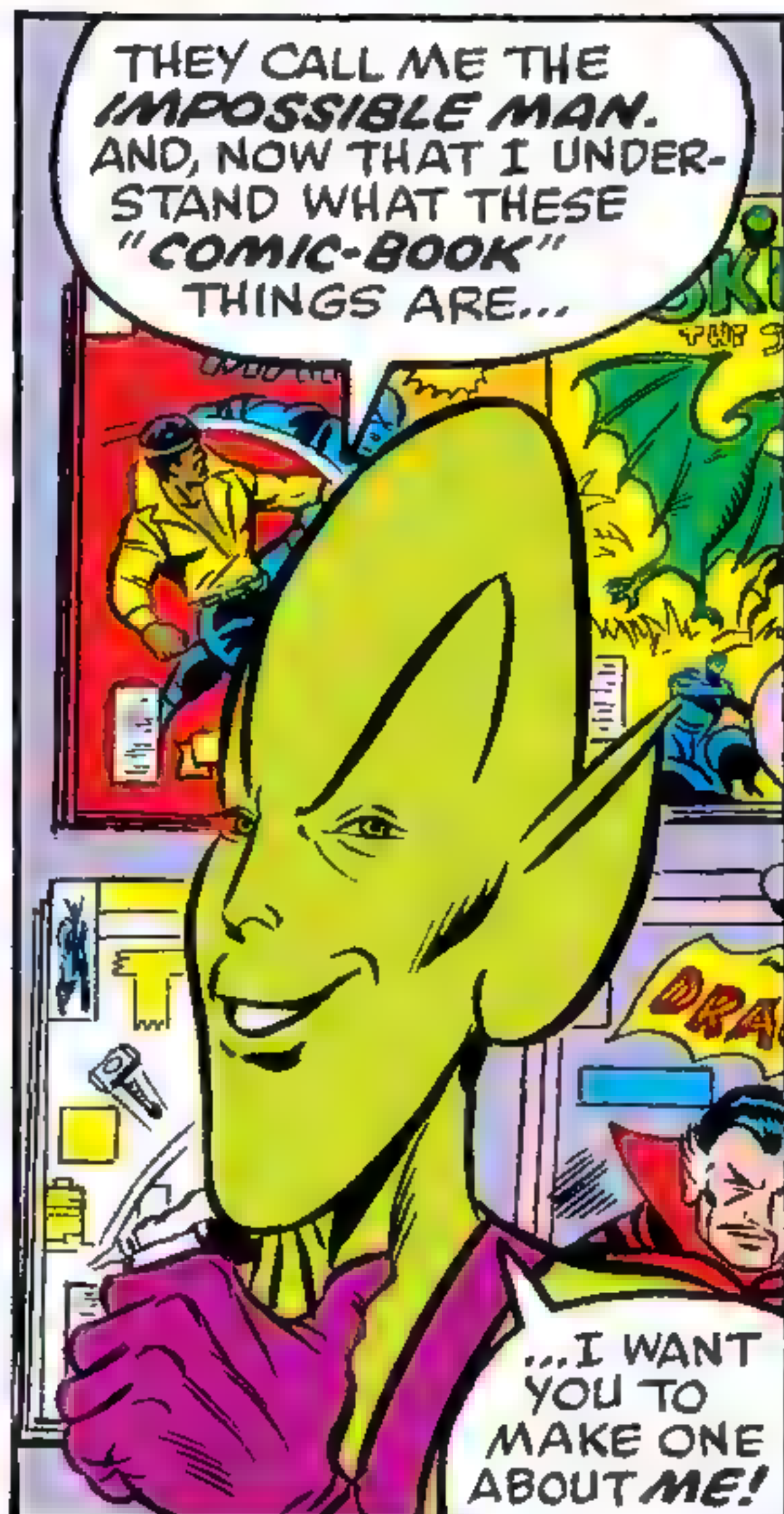
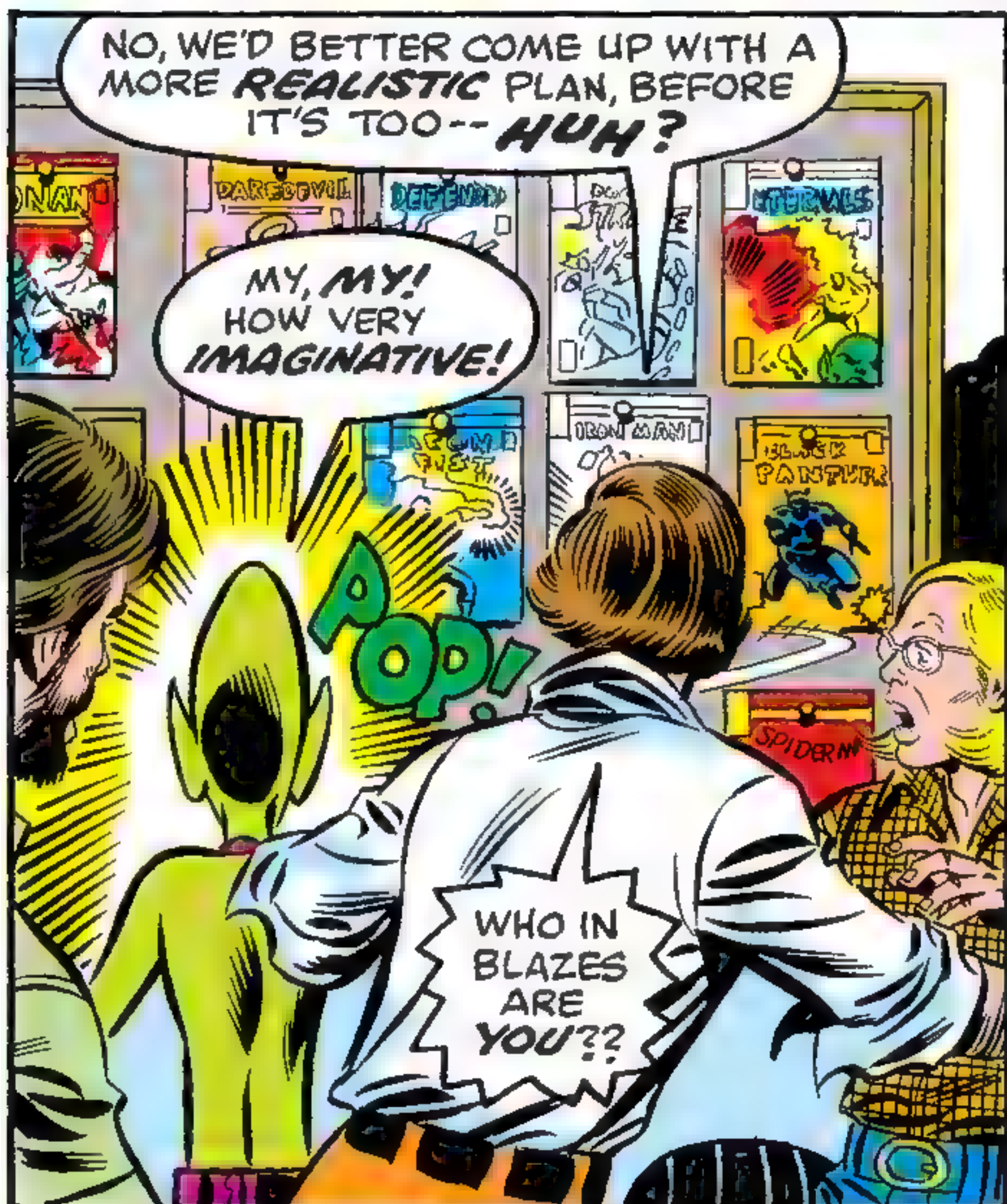
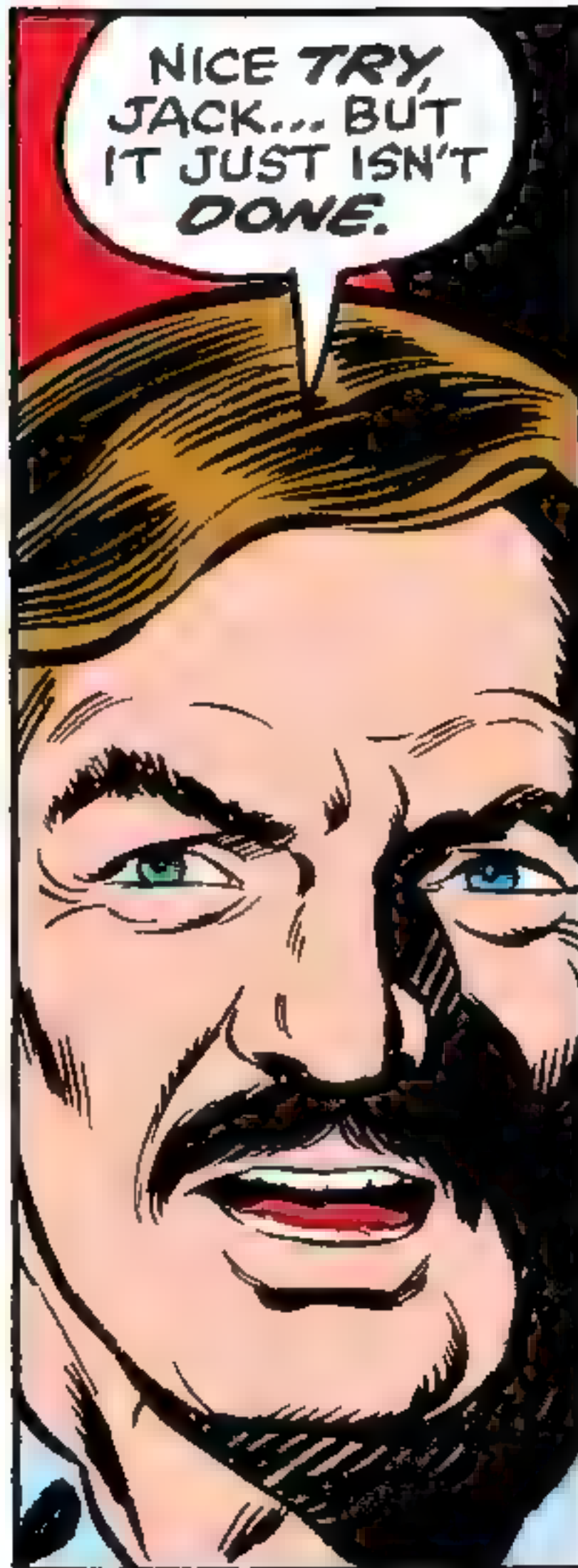
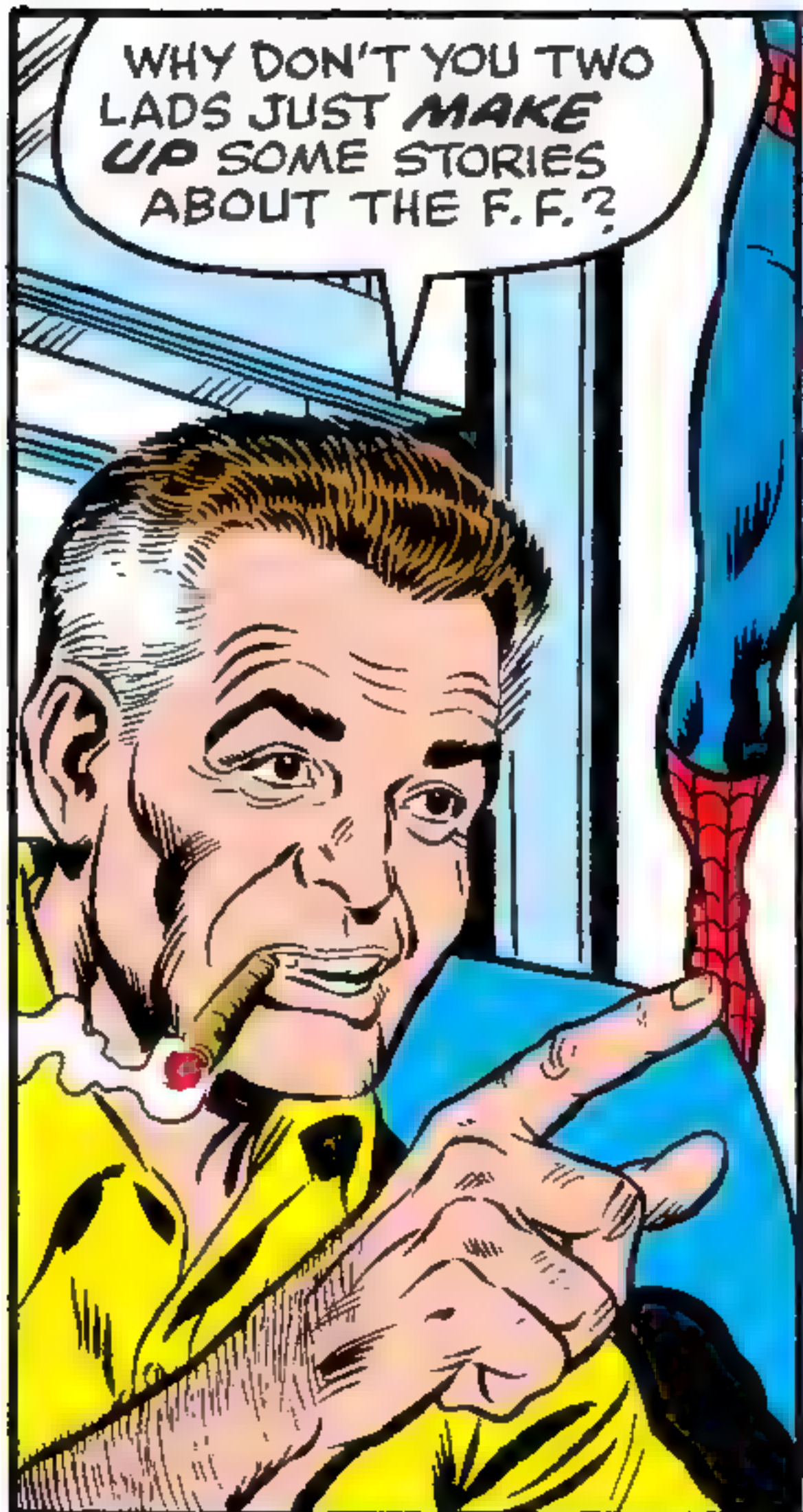
*SEE F.F. #10-11. --RASCALLY.

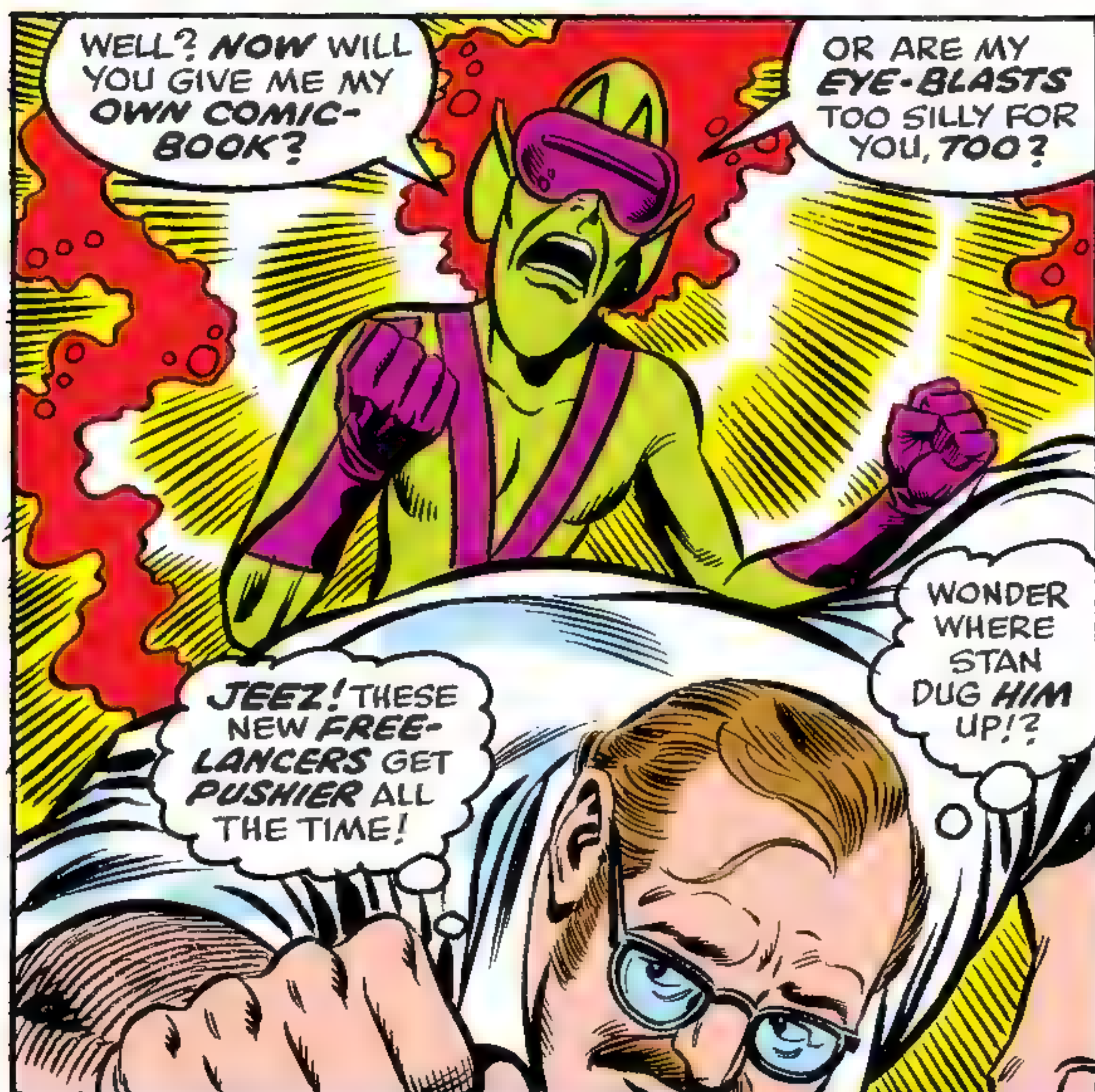
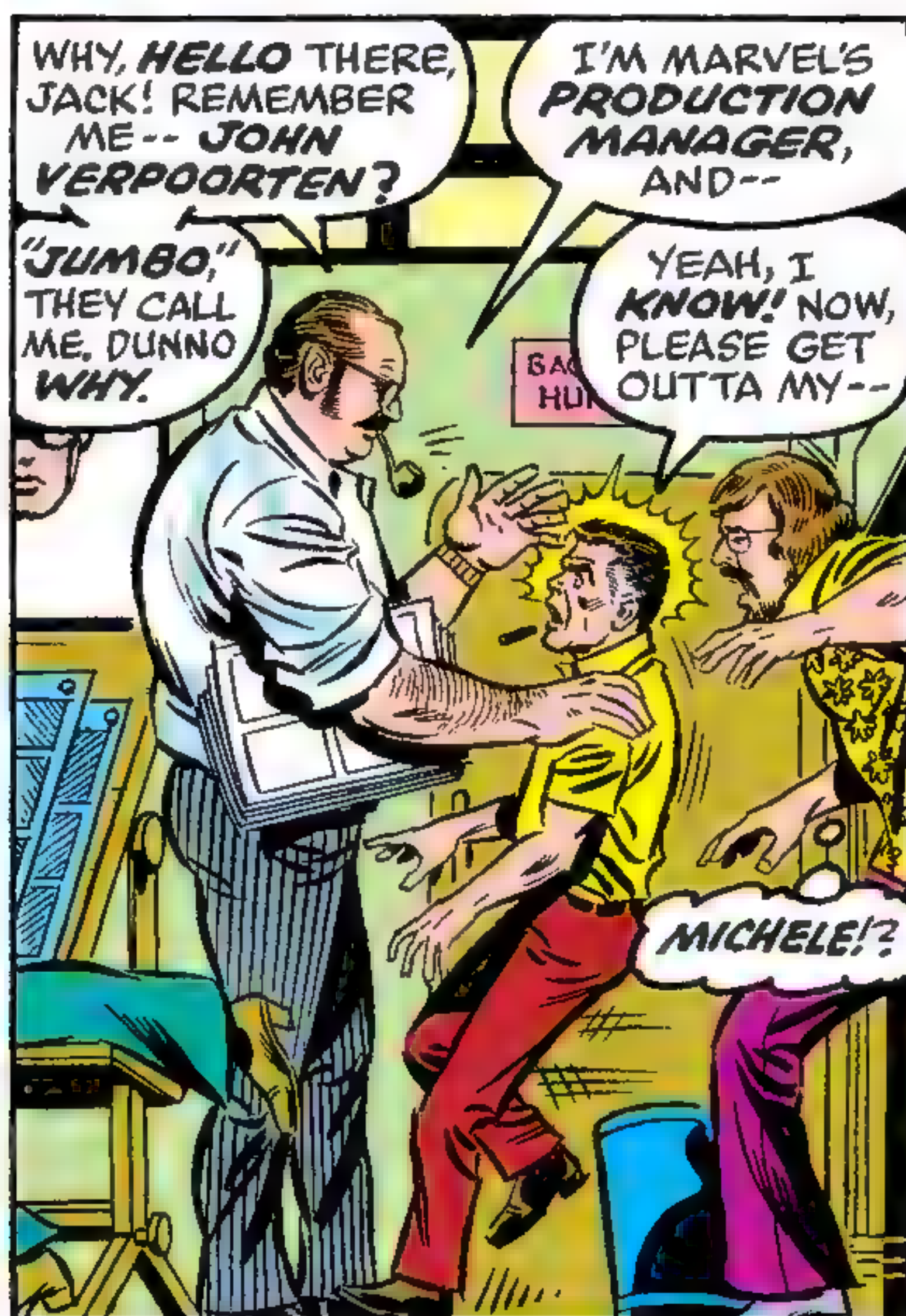
IT IS AN EMERGENCY! JOLTIN' JOE SINNOTT'S WAITING FOR PAGES RIGHT NOW...

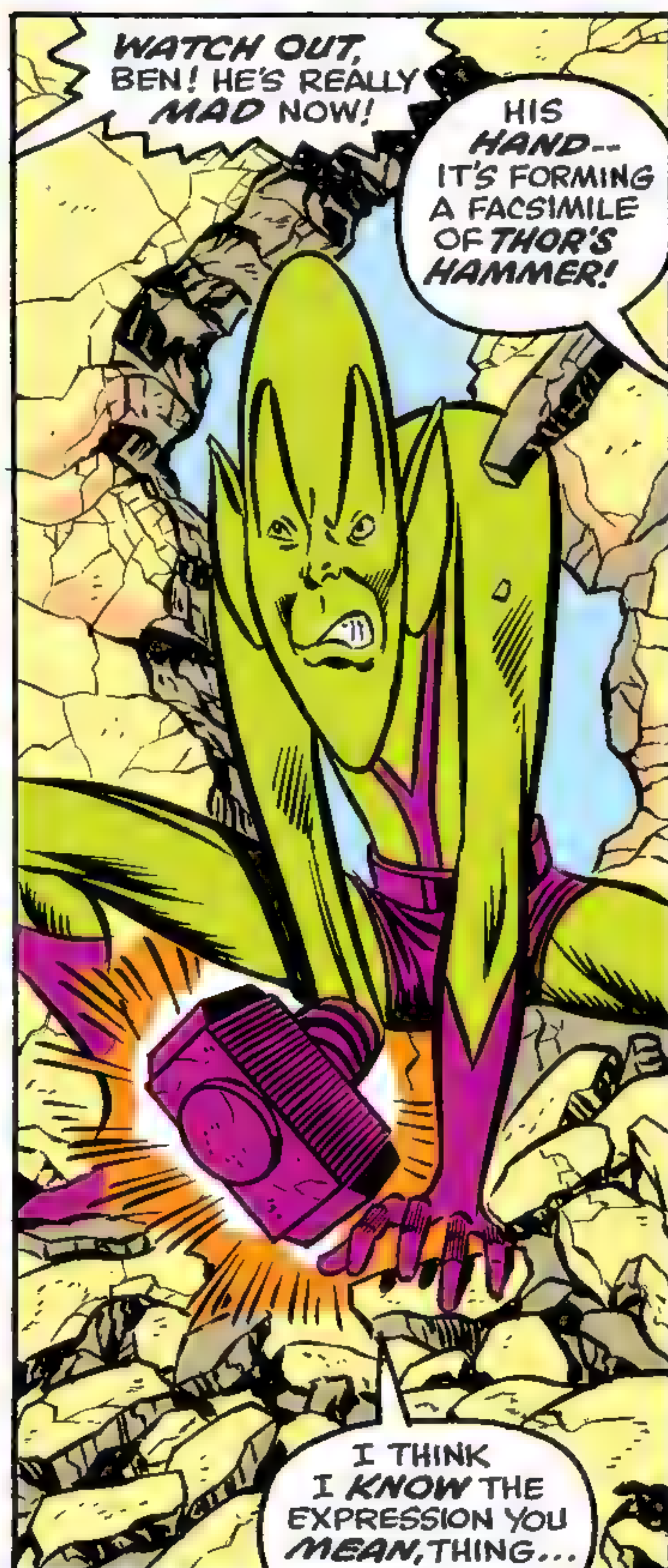
AND HOW CAN WE DO OUR AUTHORIZED F.F. COMIC-MAG*-- IF THEY DON'T TELL US WHAT THEY'VE BEEN INTO?

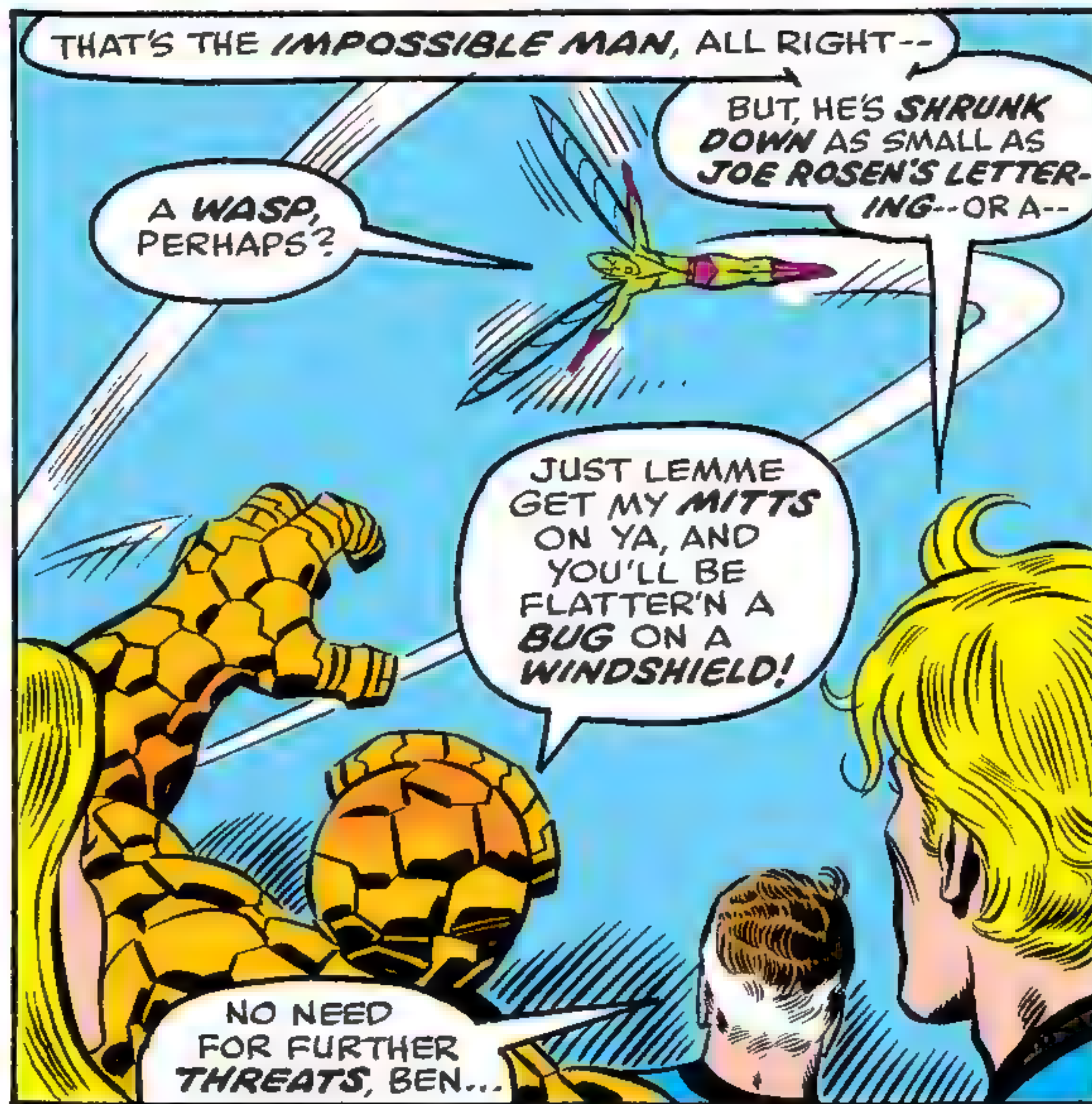
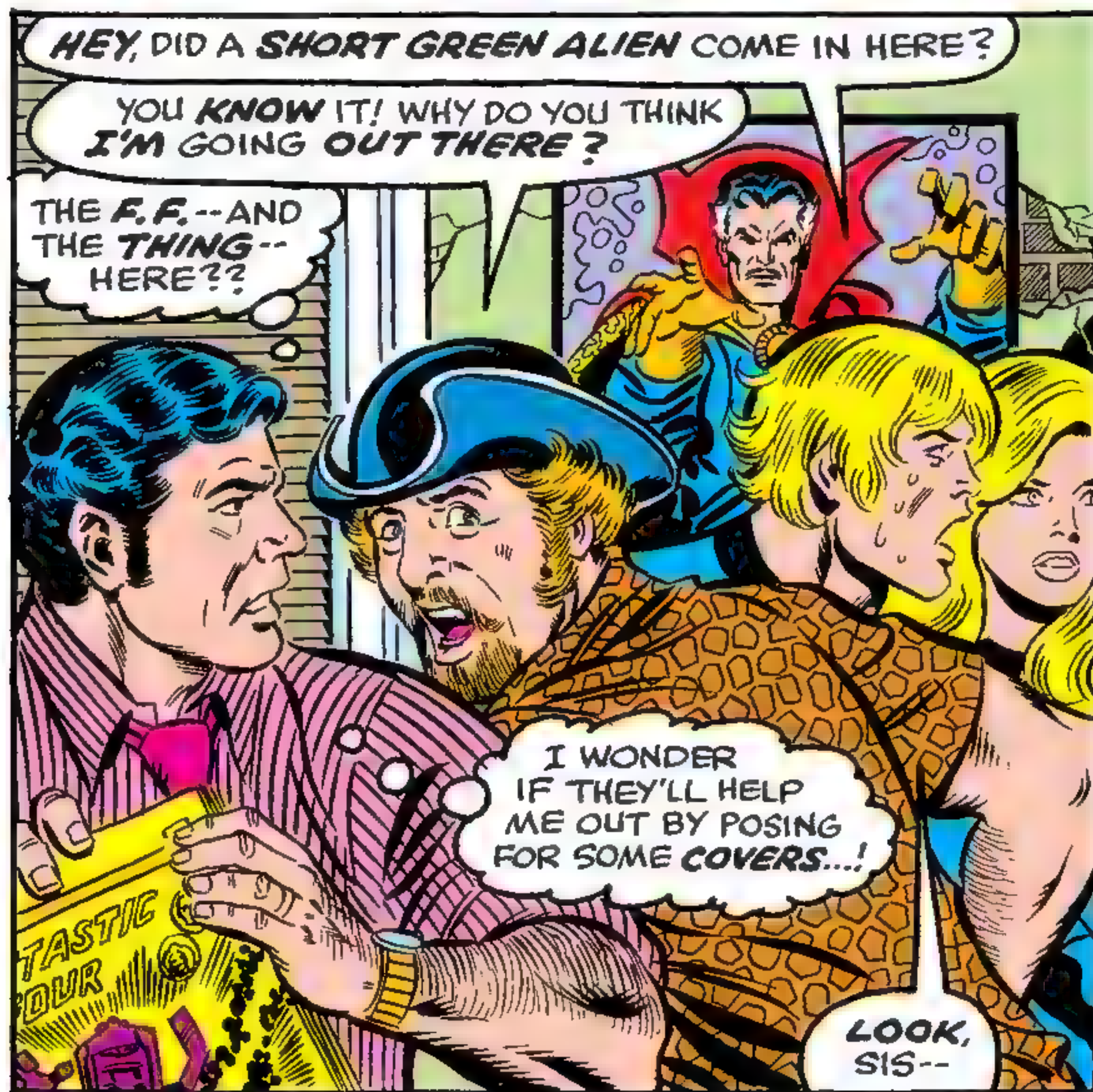
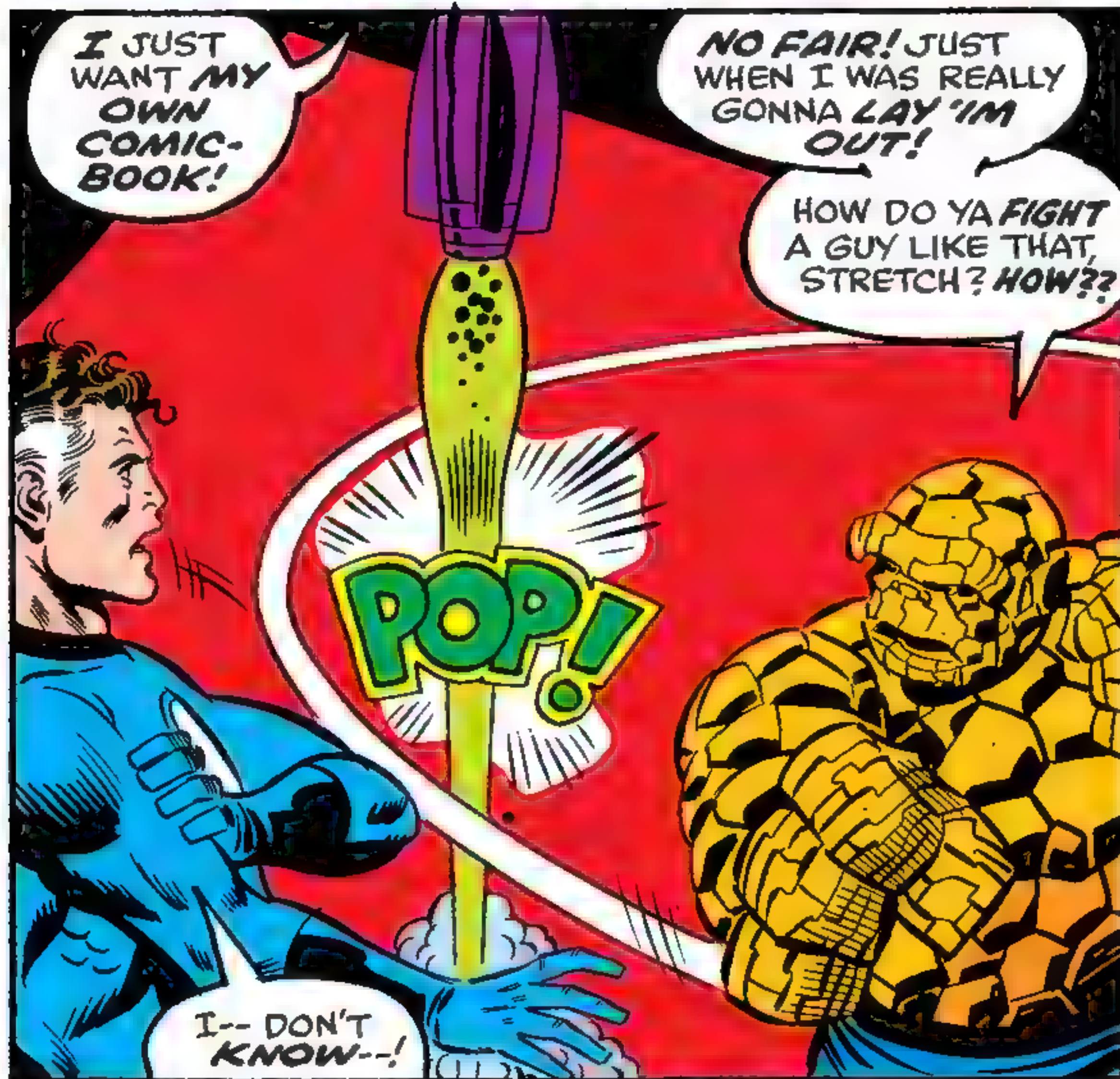
YOU GOT ANY IDEAS, JACK? I KNOW YOU JUST GOT IN FROM THE COAST, BUT--

SURE I'VE GOT AN IDEA...











YOU'RE NOT **ORDINARILY** THE VIOLENT SORT. **WHY** DID YOU--?

BECAUSE I SIMPLY ASKED THESE PEOPLE TO DO A **COMIC-BOOK** ABOUT ME...

...AND THEY SAID **NO!**

THEN **MAYBE--** JUST **MAYBE--**



--THERE'S A WAY TO KEEP THAT **ZANY** FROM CAUSING ANY **MORE** DAMAGE!

QUICK! WHERE'S **STAN LEE**?

OVER **THERE!**



HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

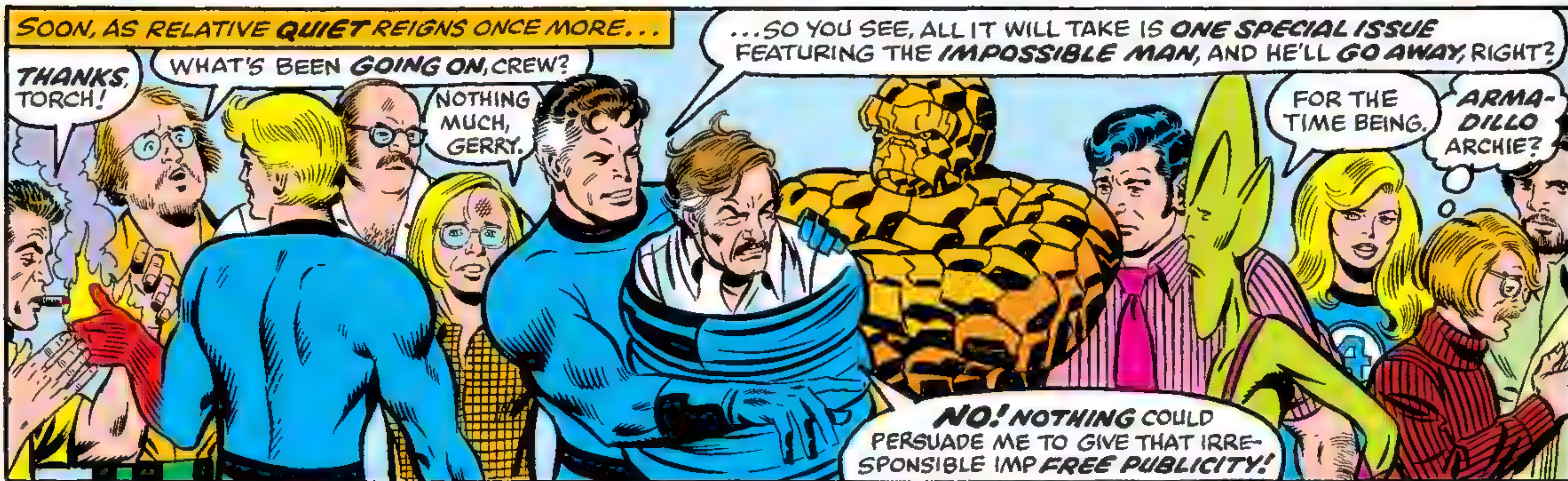
WHO--? OH, IT'S **YOU**, MR. **FANTASTIC!** WHAT'S **UP?**

ARDUOUS **ARCHIE?**



YOU AND I HAVE GOT TO HAVE A **FAST POW-WOW**, FRIEND **STAN--**

--AND I MEAN **NOW!**



SOON, AS RELATIVE QUIET REIGNS ONCE MORE...

THANKS, TORCH!

WHAT'S BEEN **GOING ON**, CREW?

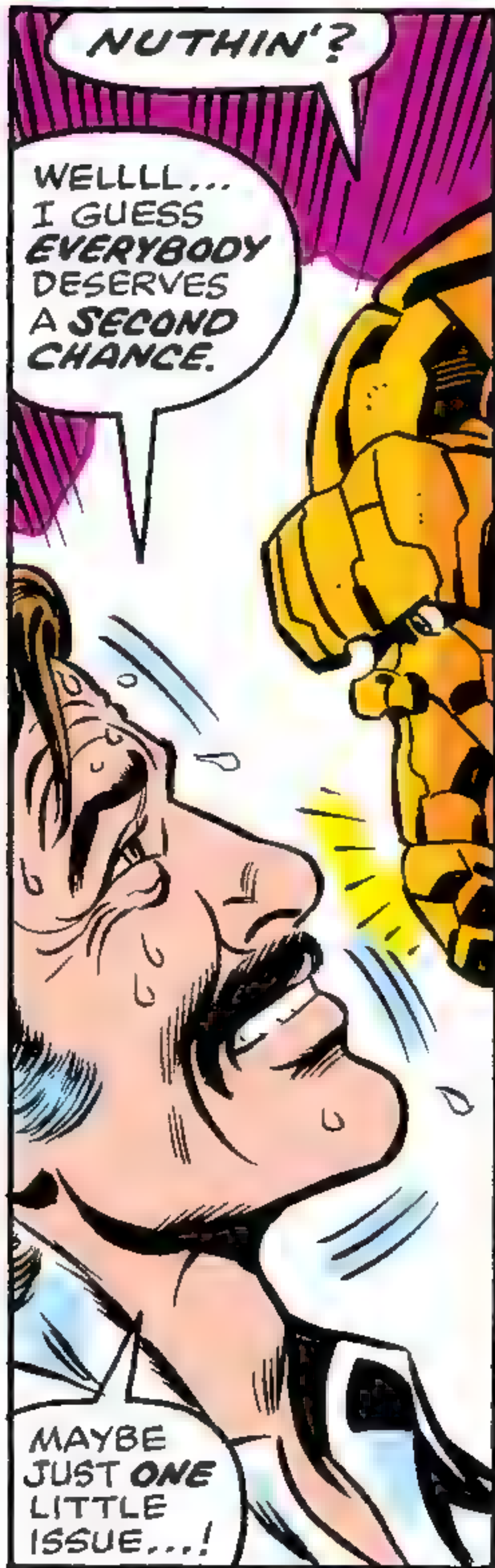
NOTHING MUCH, **GERRY**.

...SO YOU SEE, ALL IT WILL TAKE IS **ONE SPECIAL ISSUE** FEATURING THE **IMPOSSIBLE MAN**, AND HE'LL **GO AWAY**, RIGHT?

FOR THE TIME BEING.

ARMA-DILLO **ARCHIE?**

NO! NOTHING COULD PERSUADE ME TO GIVE THAT **IRRESPONSIBLE IMP FREE PUBLICITY!**



NUTHIN'?

WELL... I GUESS **EVERYBODY** DESERVES A **SECOND CHANCE**.

MAYBE JUST **ONE** LITTLE **ISSUE...**



AM I **EVER!**

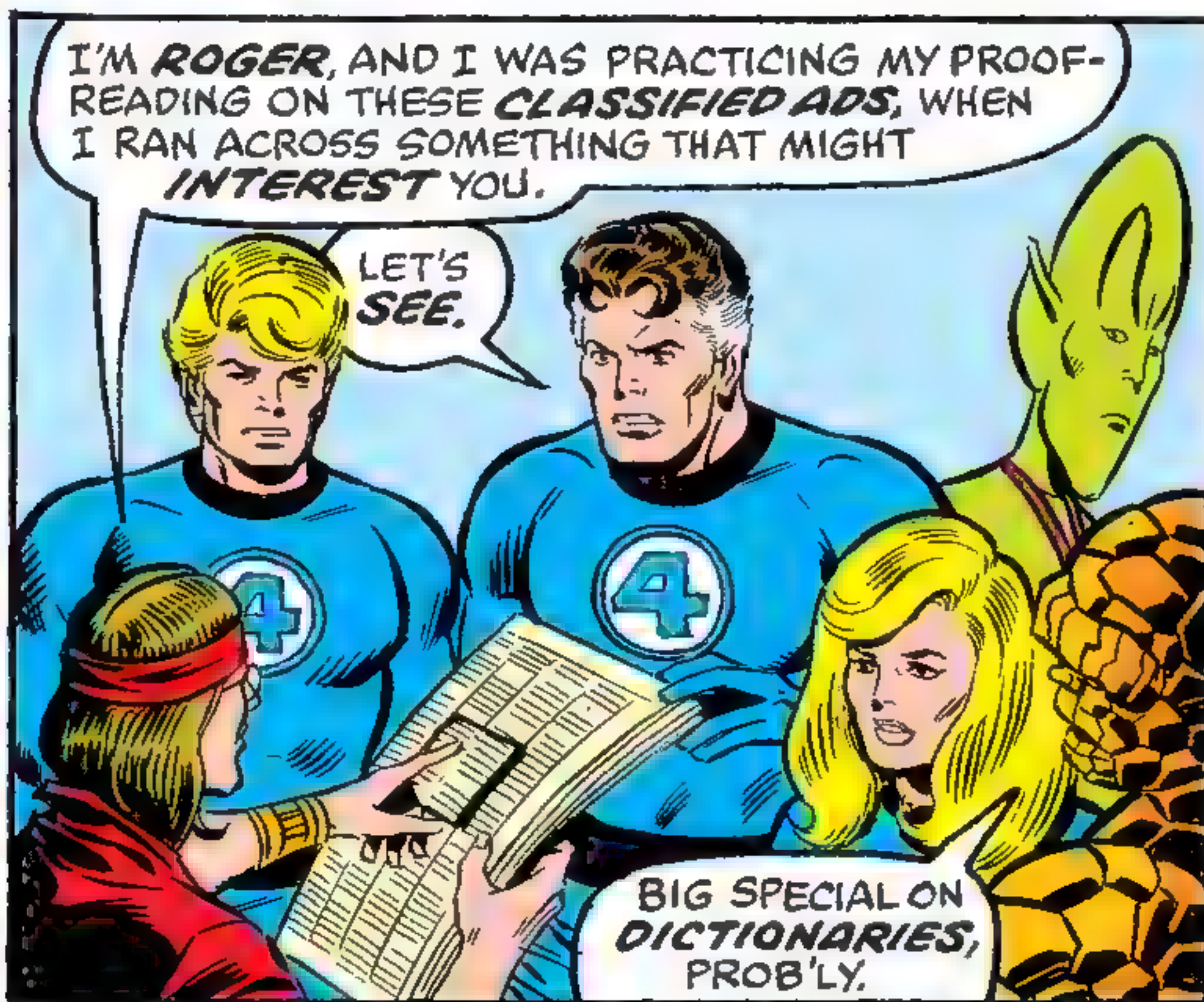
YOU **HAPPY** NOW, **SPOCK-EARS?**

BACK ON EARTH LESS THAN AN **HOUR**, AND I'M A **COMIC-BOOK SUPER-HERO!**

NOW I **KNOW** I'LL NEVER LEAVE THIS **PLANET** AGAIN!

EXCUSE ME, MR. **RICHARDS...**

HMMM...WE HADN'T **THOUGHT** OF IT **THAT** WAY.



I'M **ROGER**, AND I WAS PRACTICING MY **PROOF-READING** ON THESE **CLASSIFIED ADS**. WHEN I RAN ACROSS SOMETHING THAT MIGHT **INTEREST** YOU.

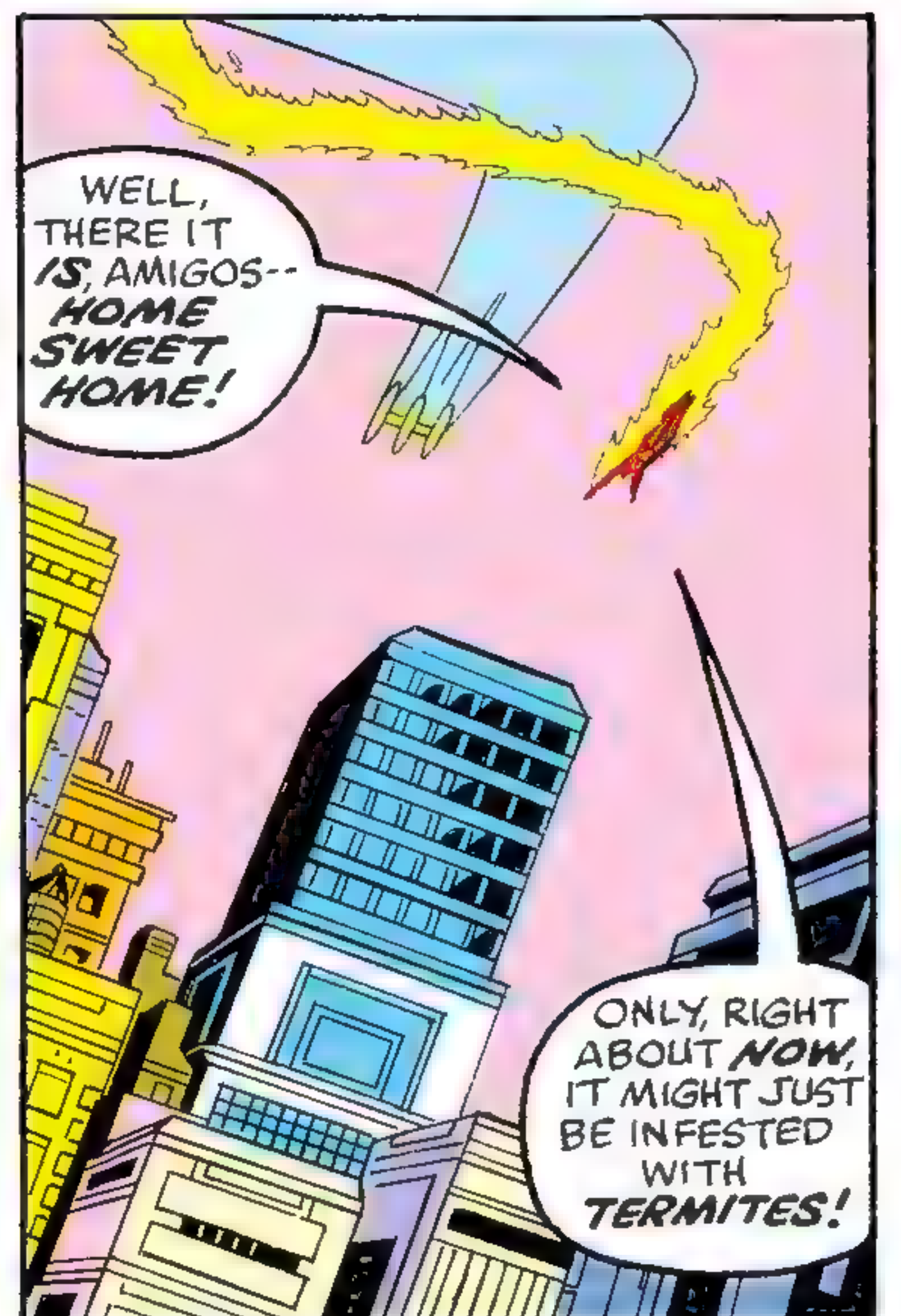
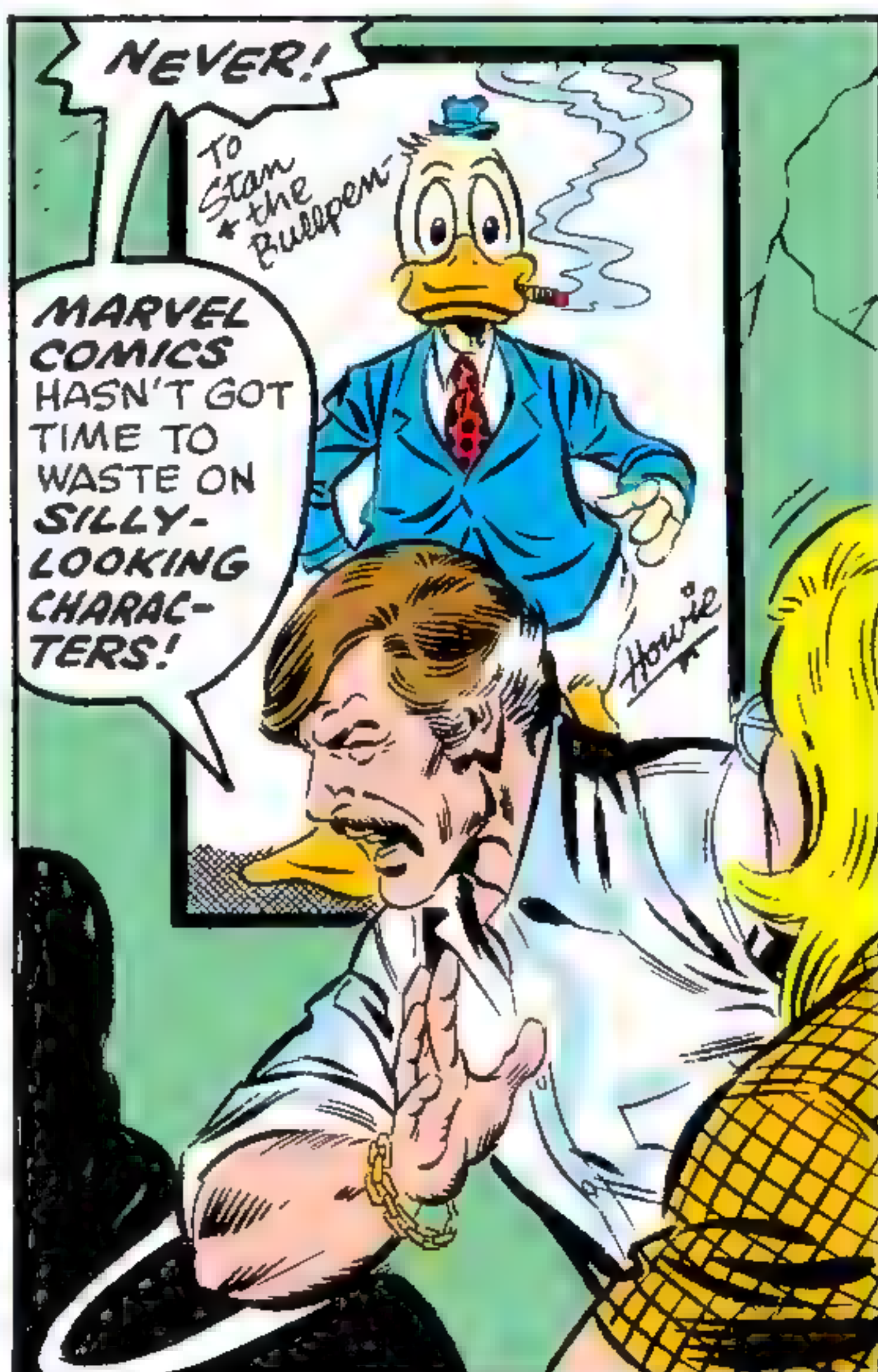
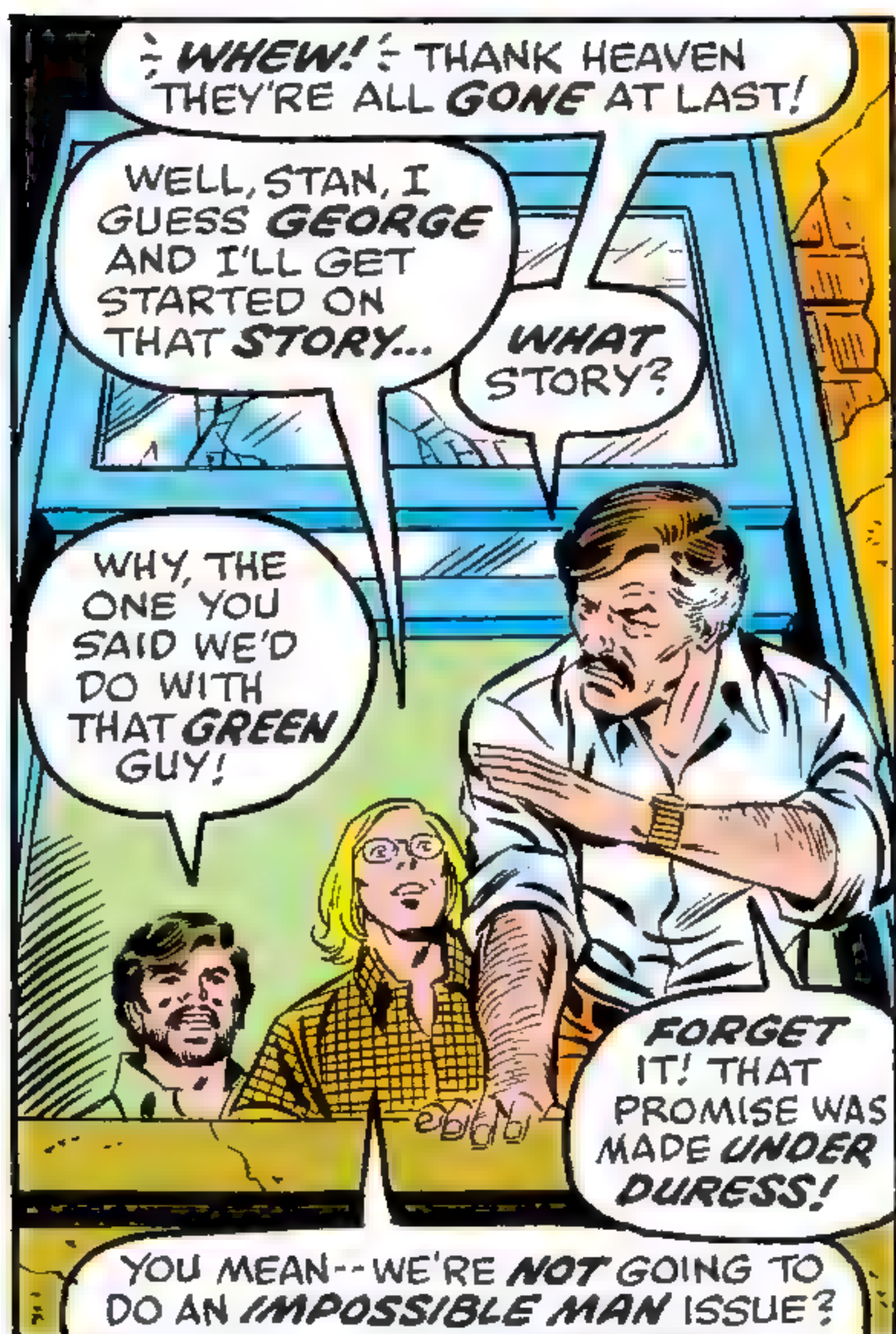
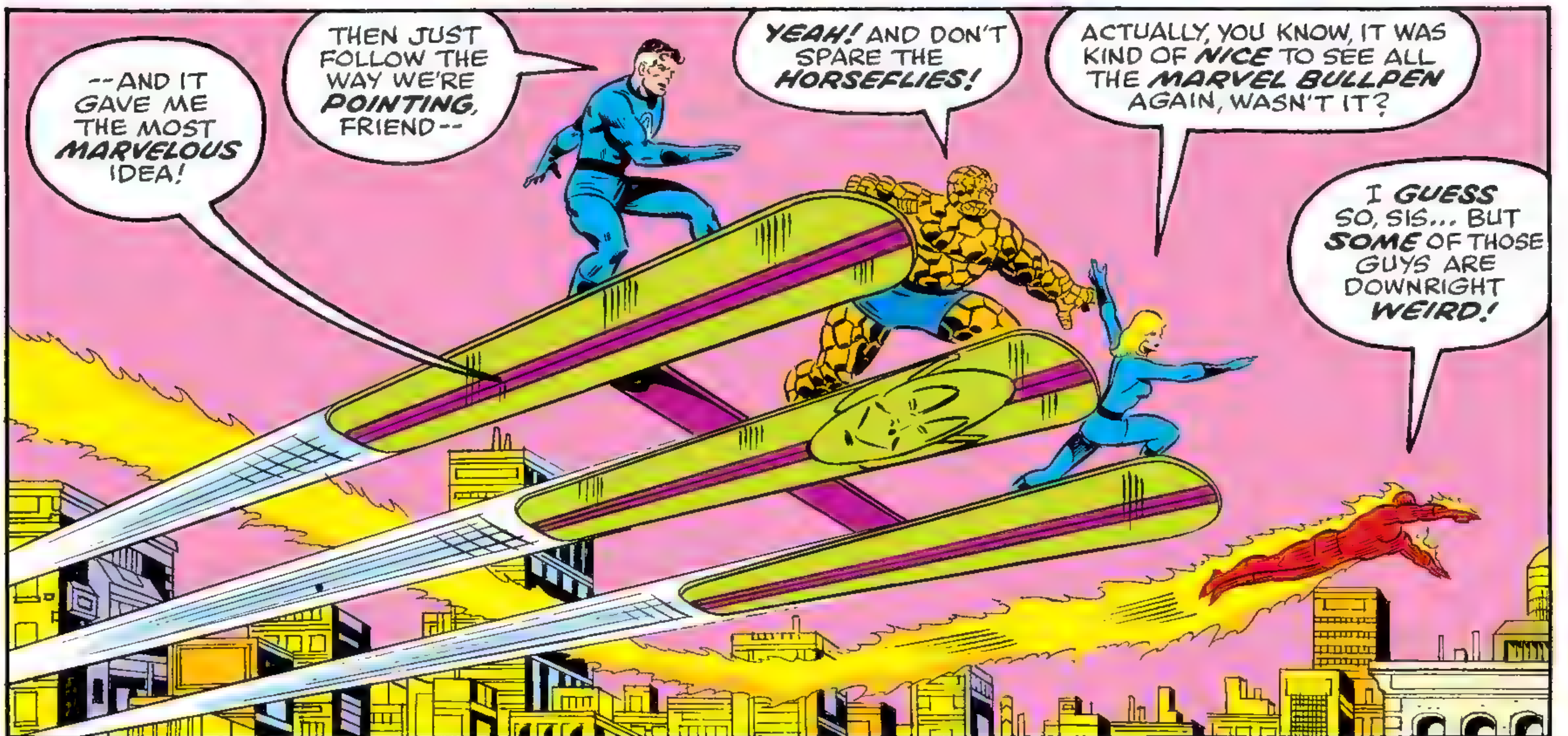
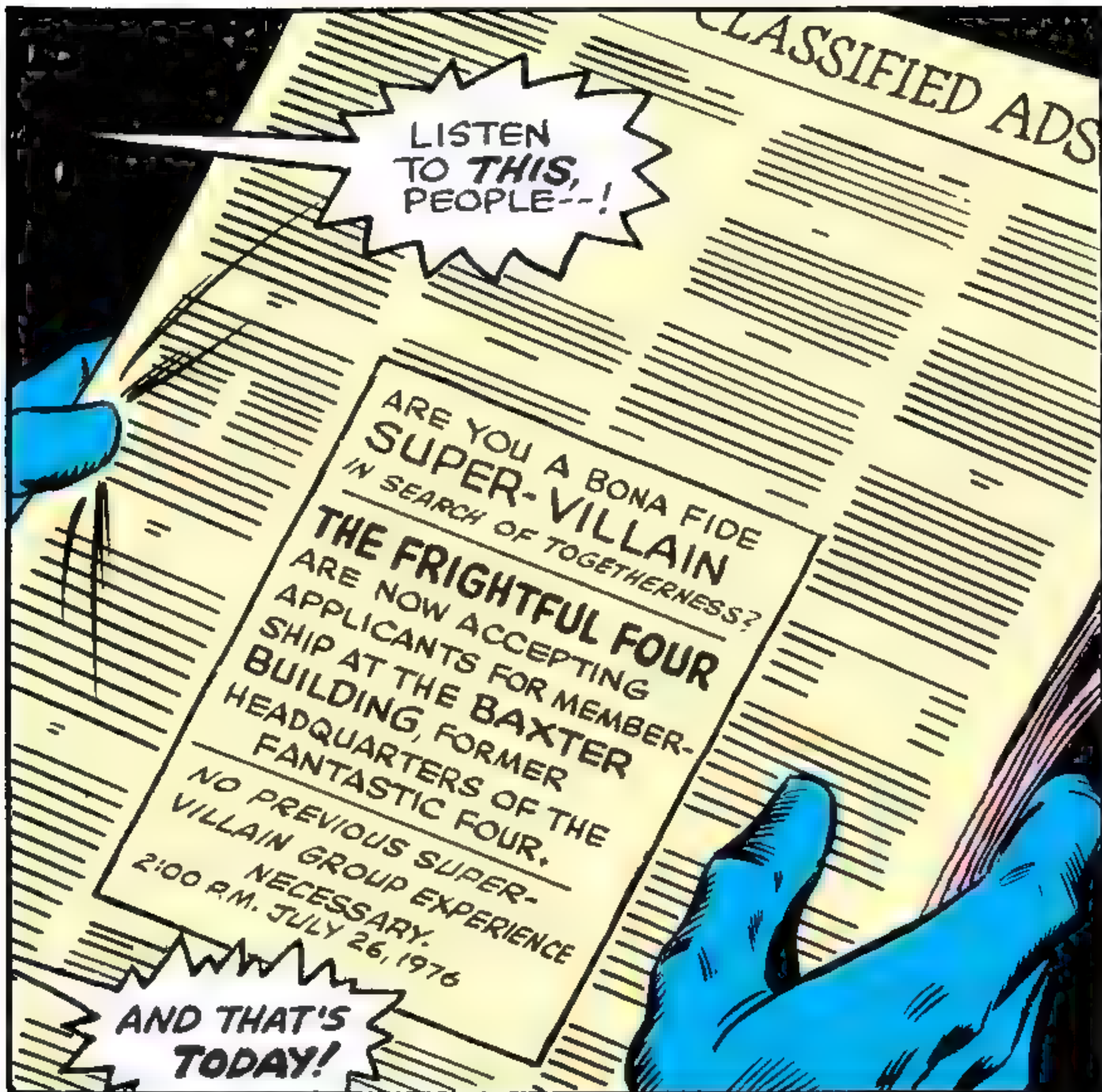
LET'S **SEE**.

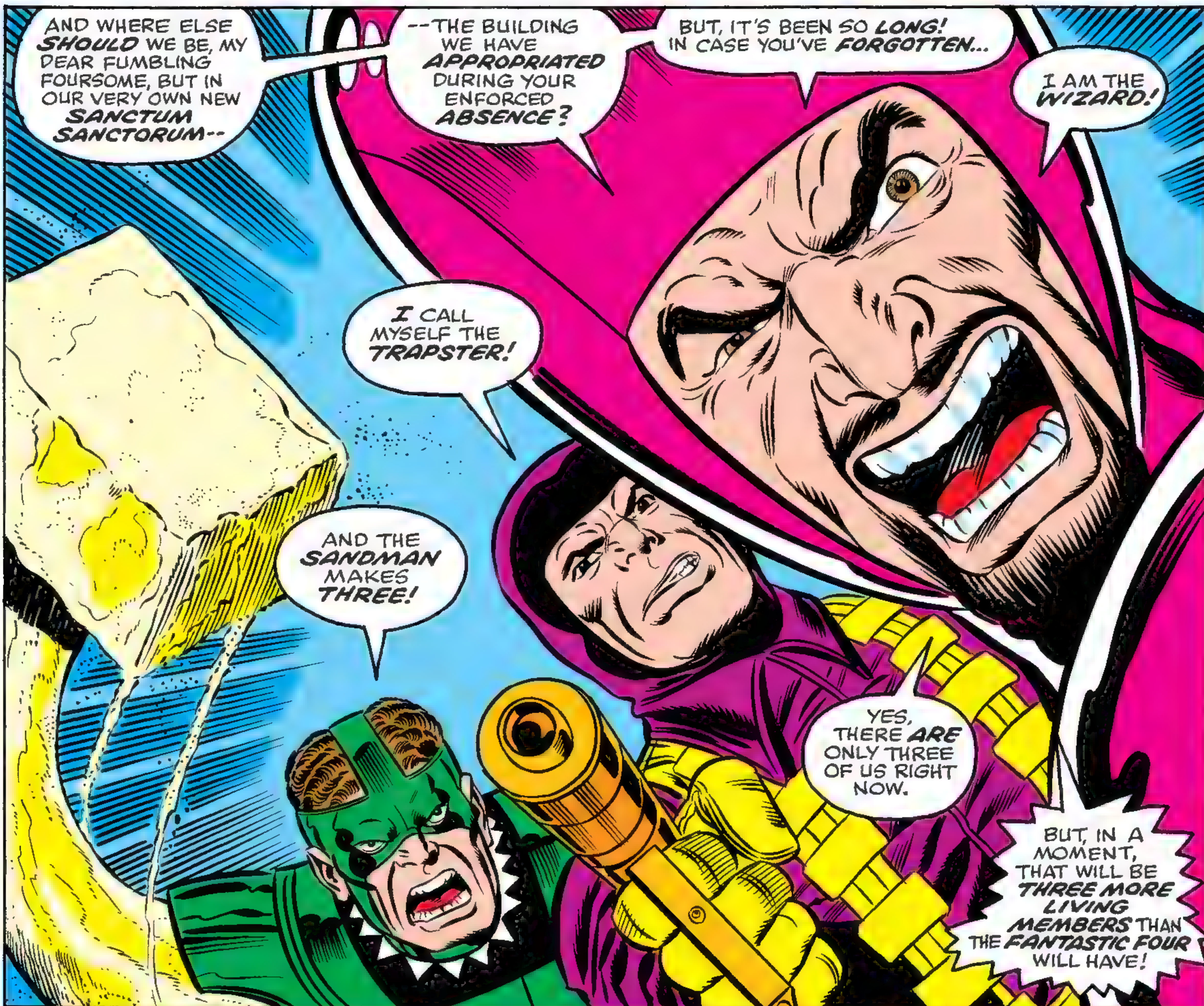
BIG SPECIAL ON **DICTIONARIES**, **PROB'LY**.



GOOD LORD!

THIS IS **TERRIBLE!**





OKAY, LITERATURE-LOVER... OFFBEAT TIME IS OVER! IN F.F. #177, WE GET DOWN TO CASES-- AND TO THE FINAL AND MOST FEARSOME MEMBER OF--

THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR!

TILL THEN-- HAVE A HAPPY!

FANTASTIC
FOUR

MARVEL COMICS GROUPTM



30¢

177

DEC
02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



TM



TM

BEHOLD!
YOU POOR,
DOOMED
FOOLS--

--THE NEWEST, MOST
POWERFUL, MOST DEADLY
MEMBER OF THE
FRIGHTFUL FOUR!

OH NO!
NO!

NOT HIM!
ANYBODY BUT
HIM!

HE'S THE
ONE SUPERFOE
WE CAN
**NEVER
DEFEAT!**



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

**LOOK OUT FOR THE
FRIGHTFUL
FOUR!**

WHY? CAN'T
THEY LOOK
OUT FOR
THEMSELVES?

S'HELP ME,
IMPY-- I DUNNO
WHICH I'D
RATHER CLOBBER--
THEM OR
YOU!

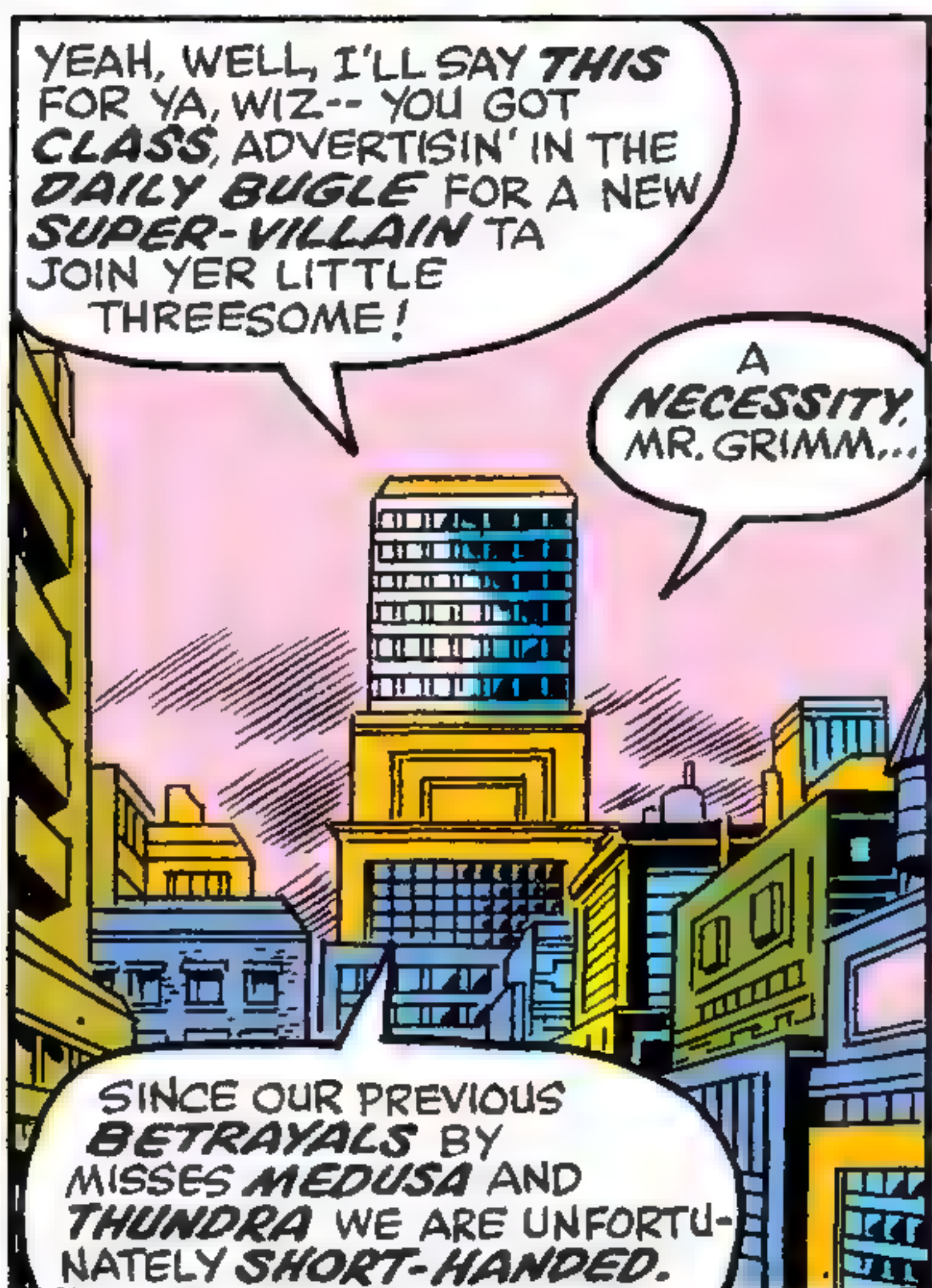
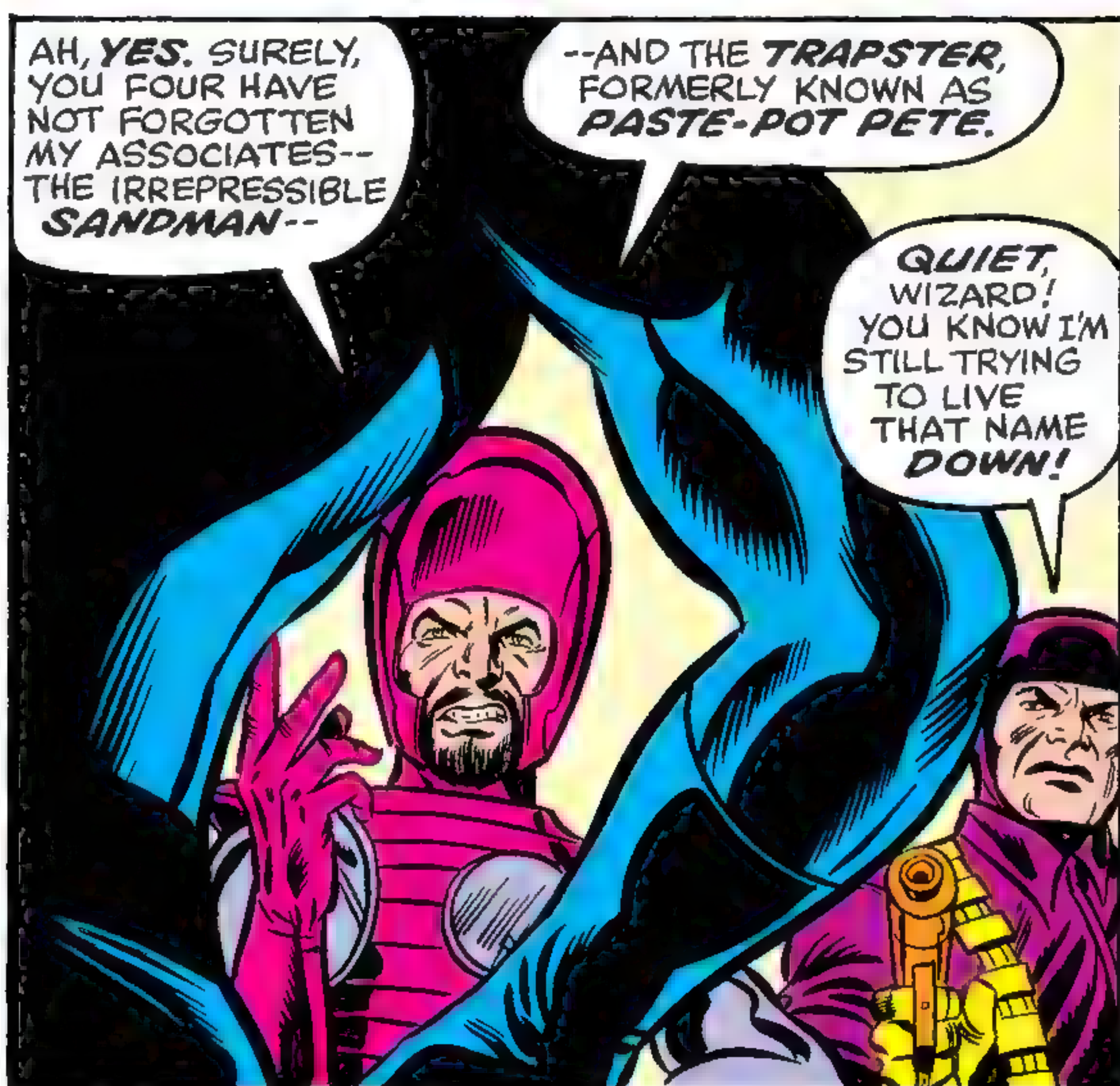
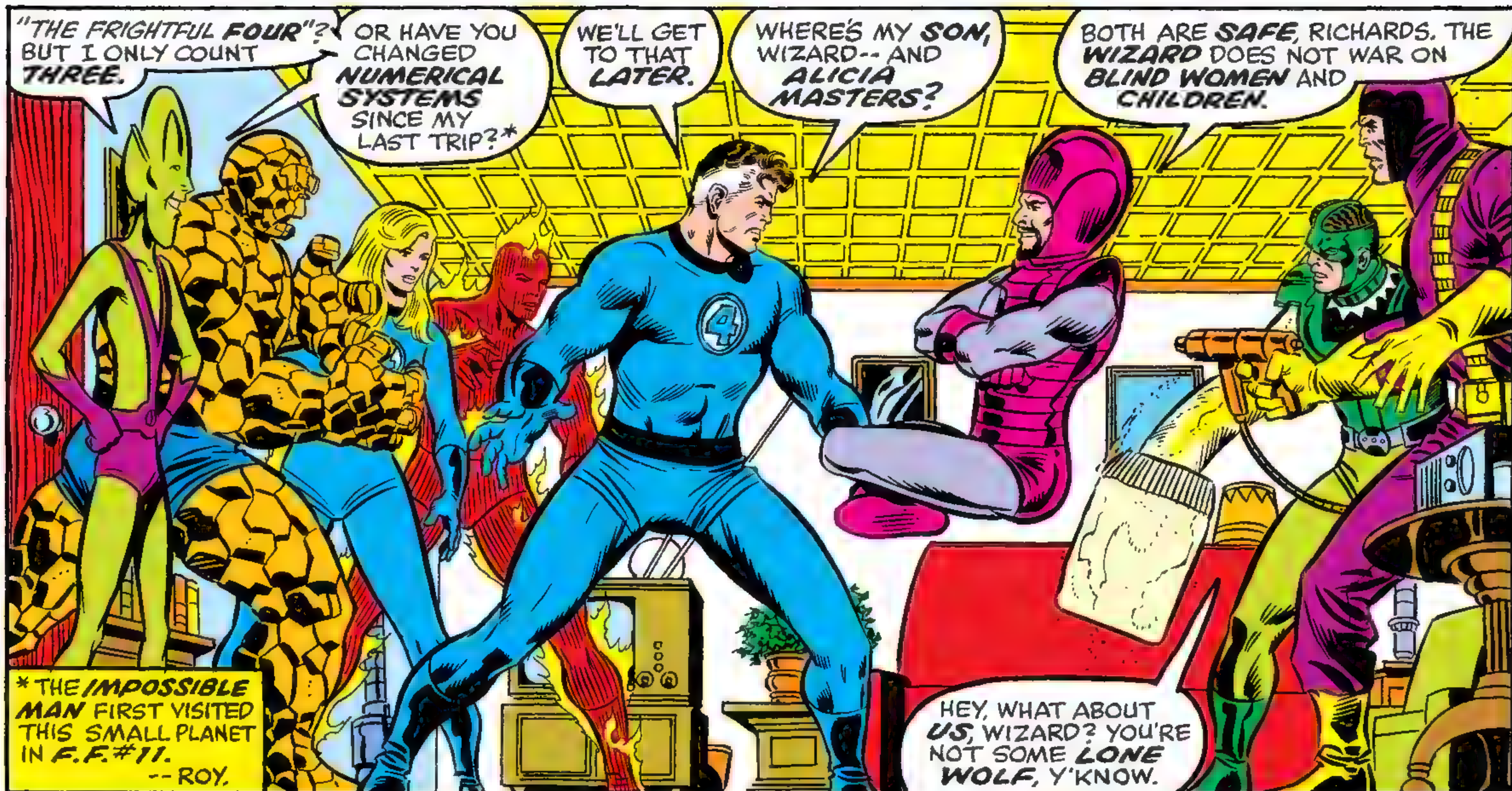
MAKE UP YOUR
MIND **FAST**,
ROCKFACE!
THOSE AREN'T
TINKER TOYS
THEY'RE AIMING
AT US!

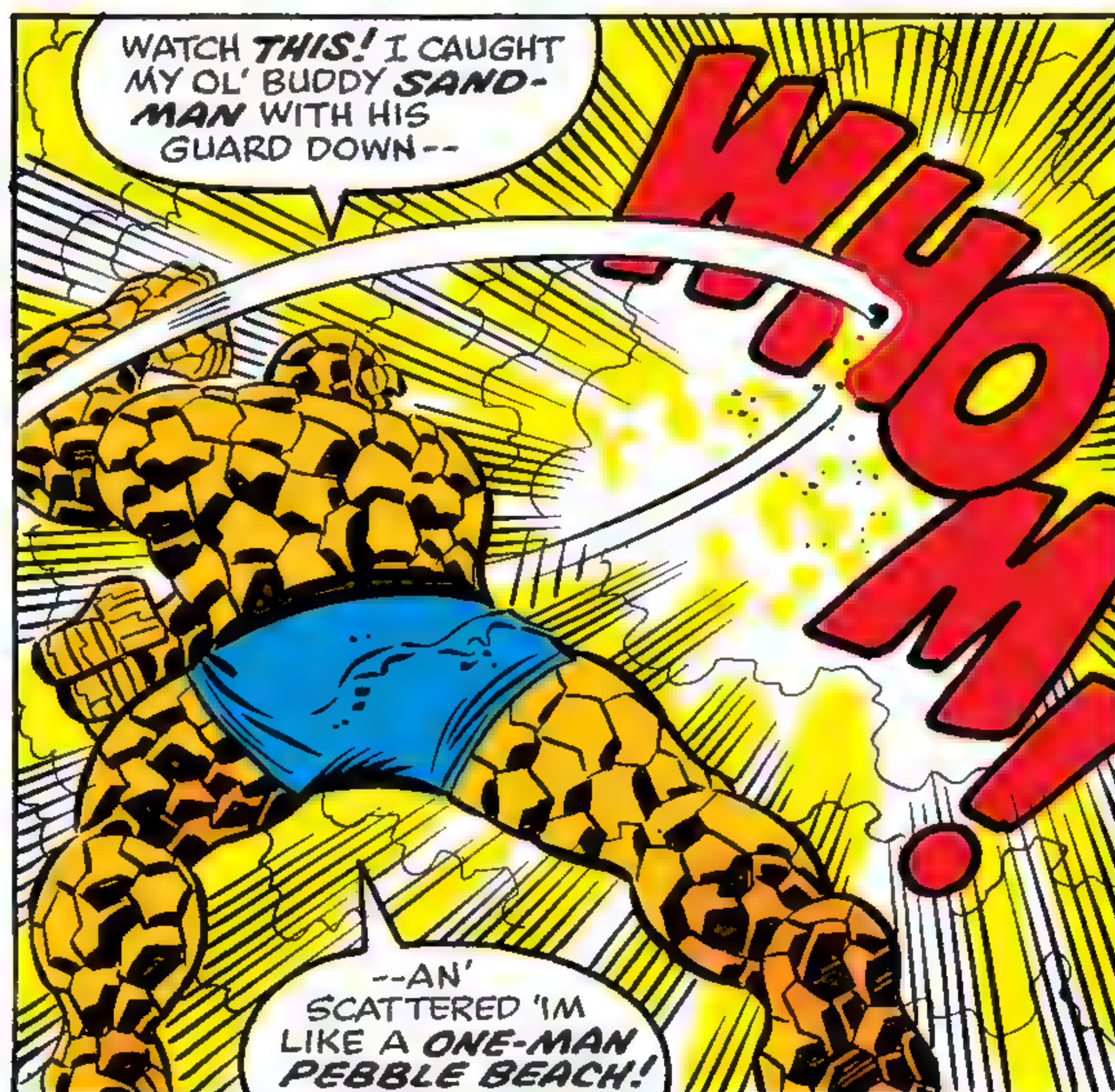
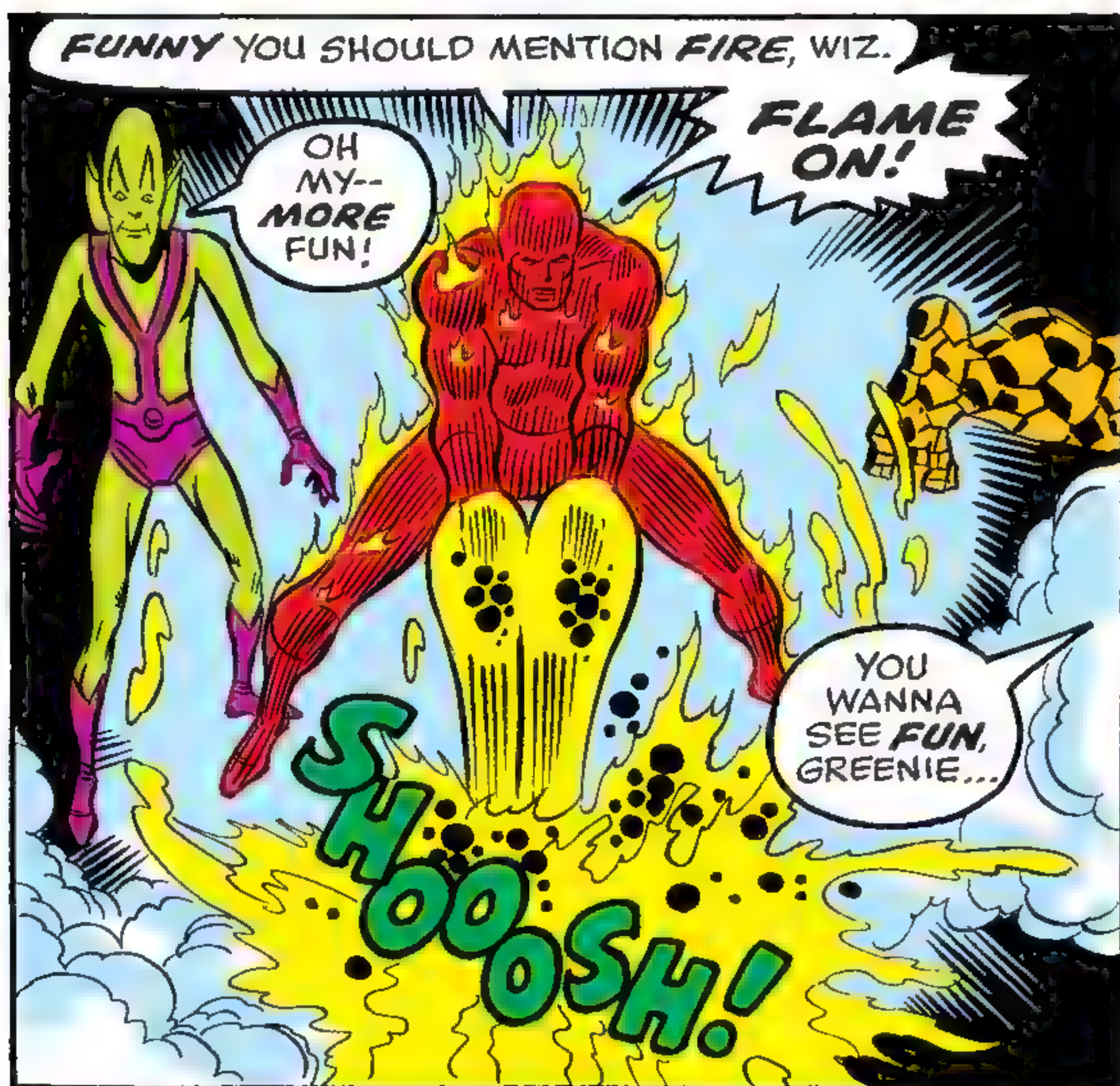
I'M
FLATTERED,
TORCH, THAT
YOU STILL
APPRECIATE THE
DANGEROUS
POWERS OF
THE **FRIGHTFUL**
FOUR!

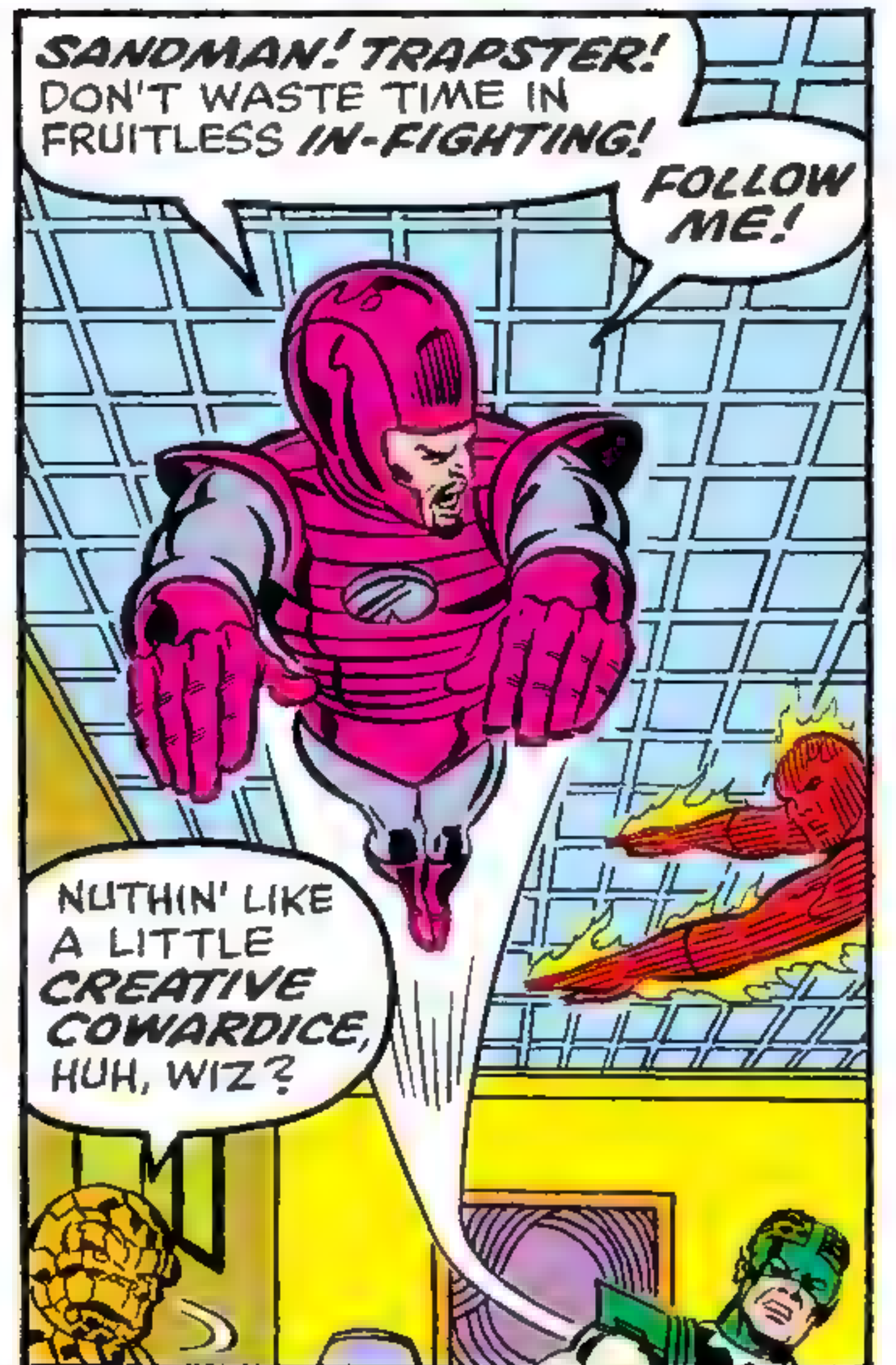
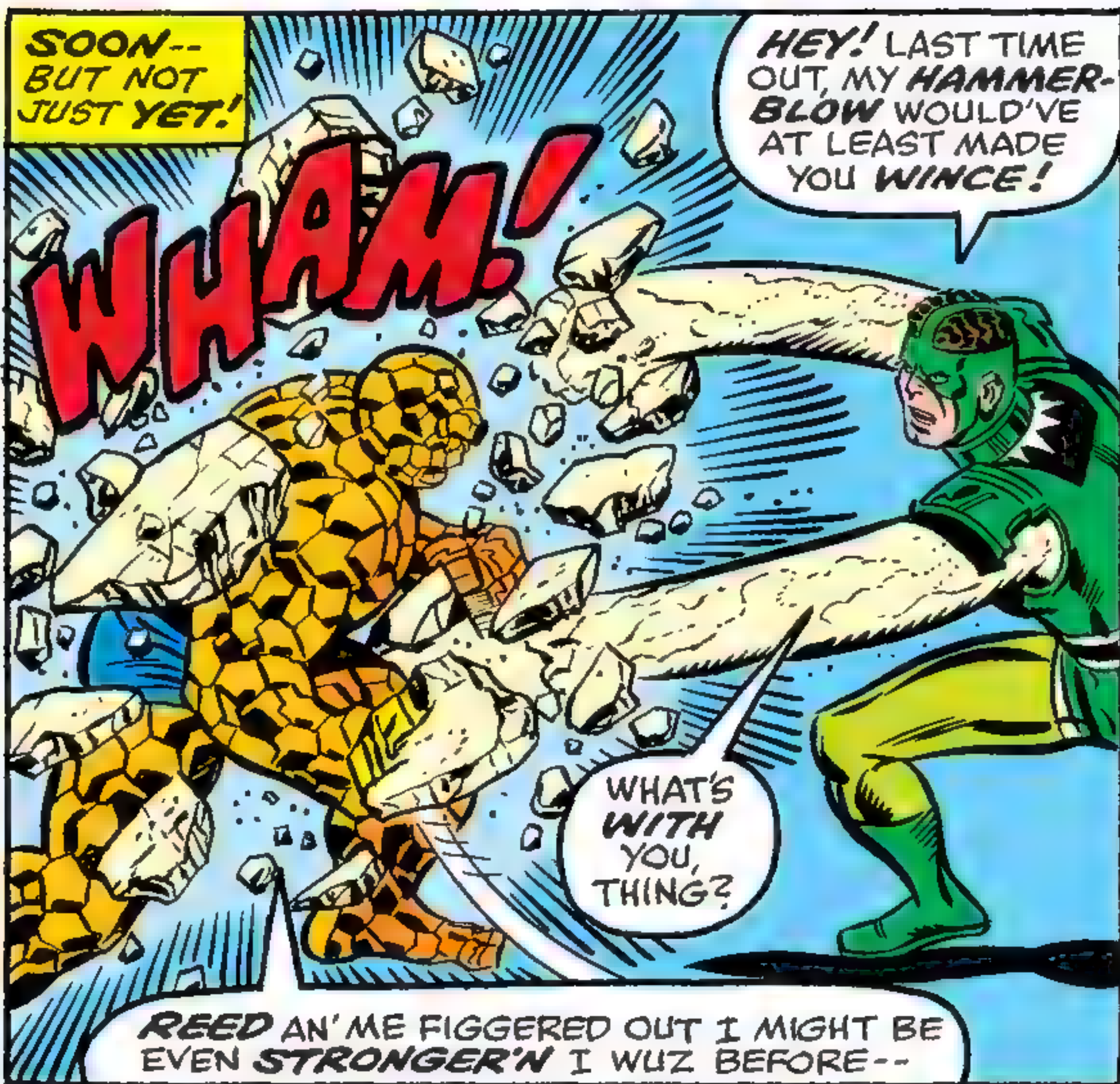
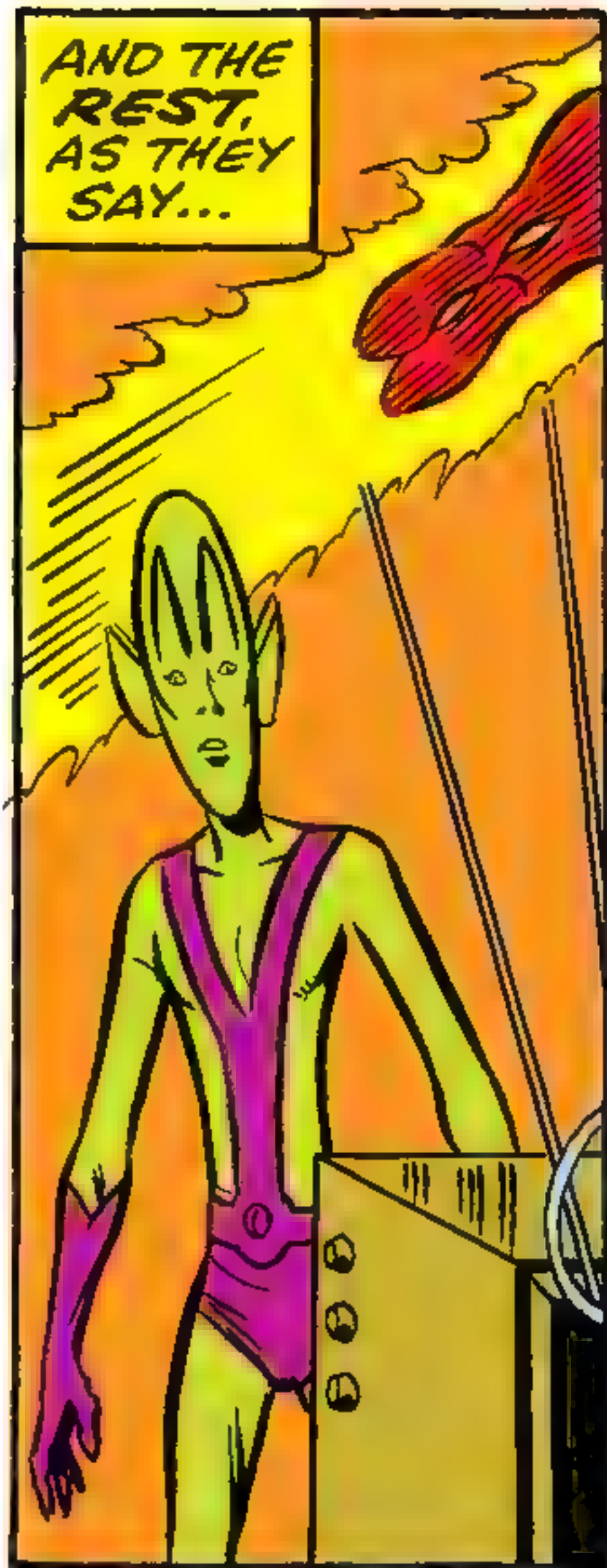
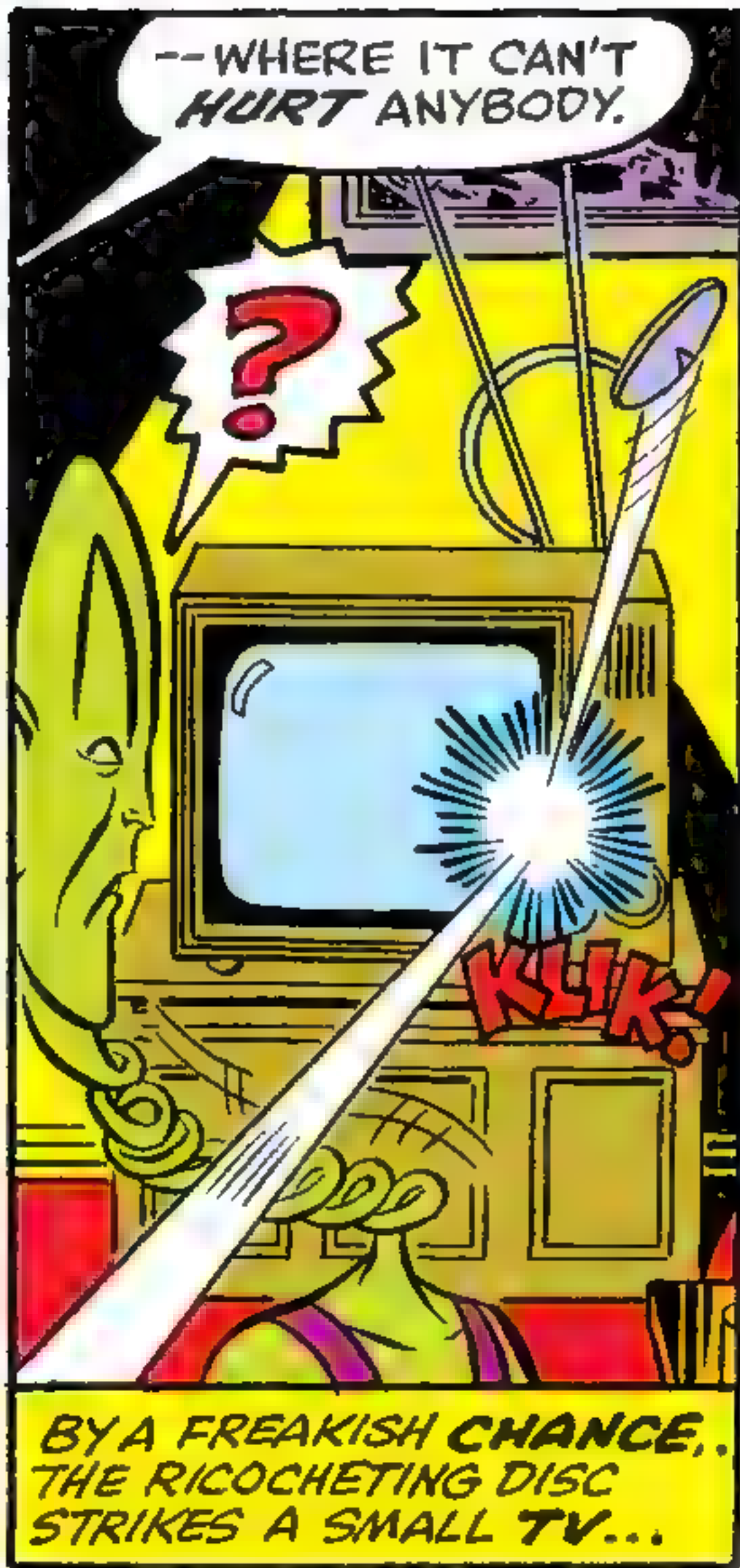
A RETURN TO NEFARIOUS NORMALCY BY:

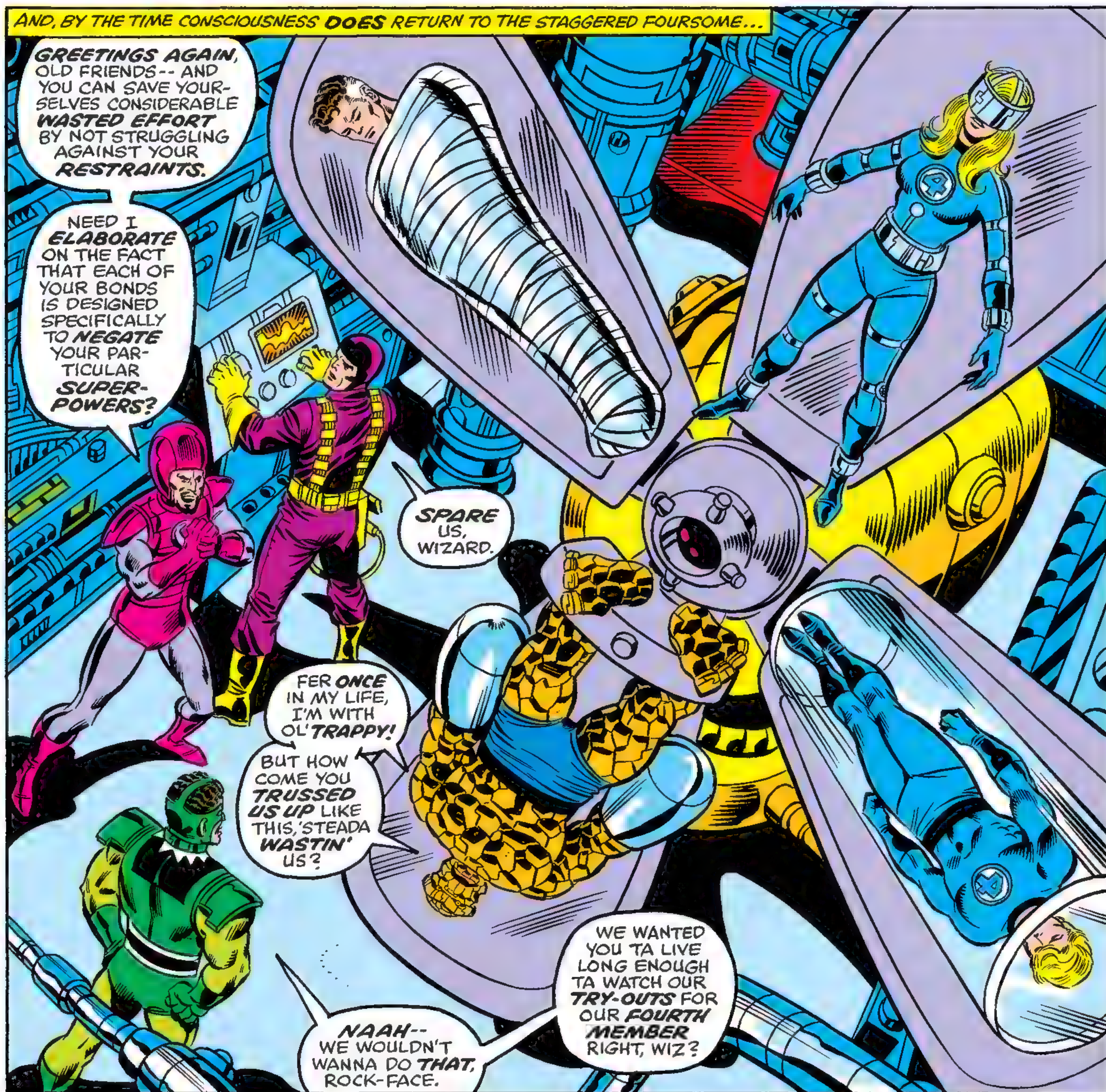
ROY THOMAS * GEORGE & JOE
Perez & SINNOTT
AUTHOR/EDITOR ILLUSTRATORS/ETC.

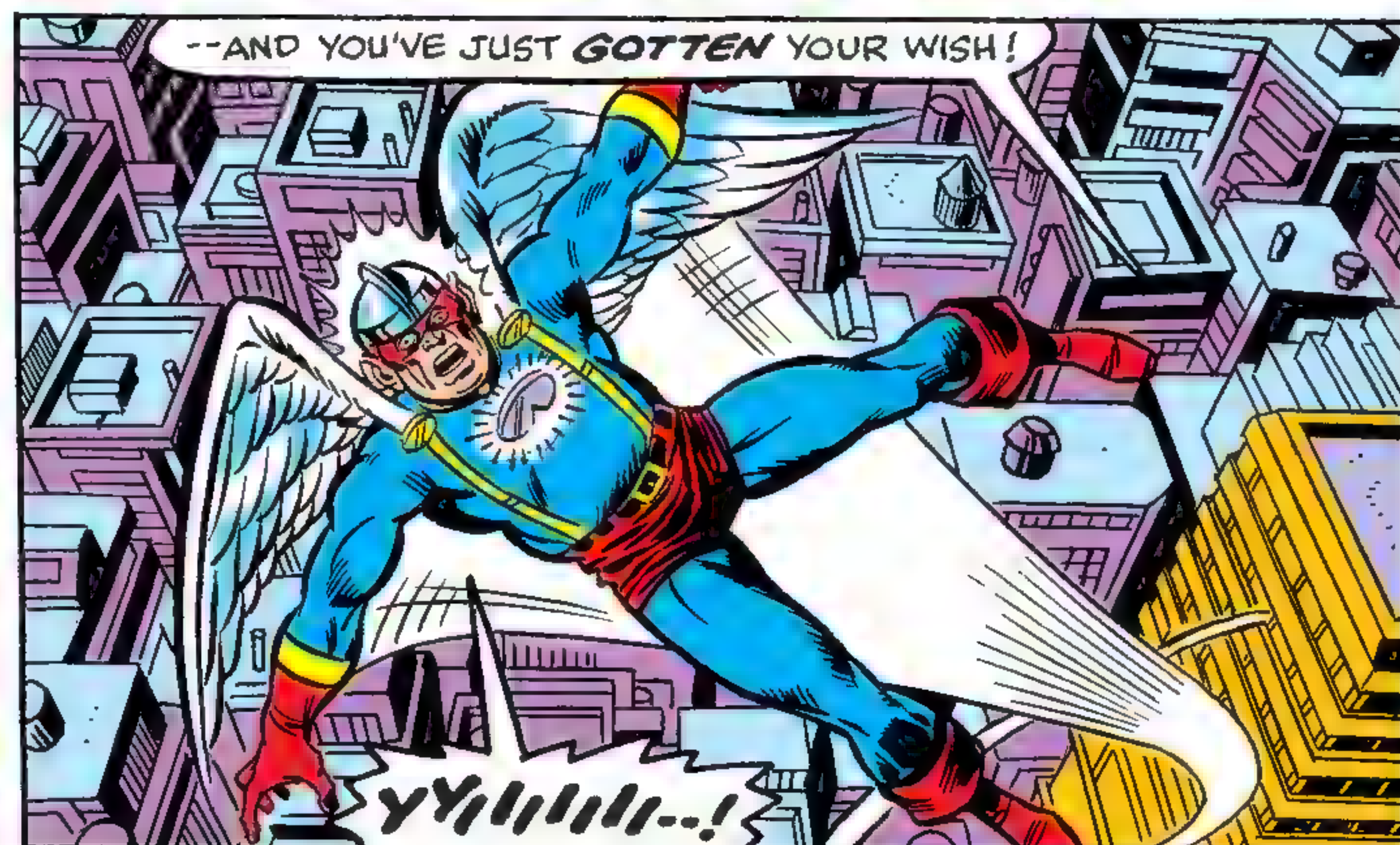
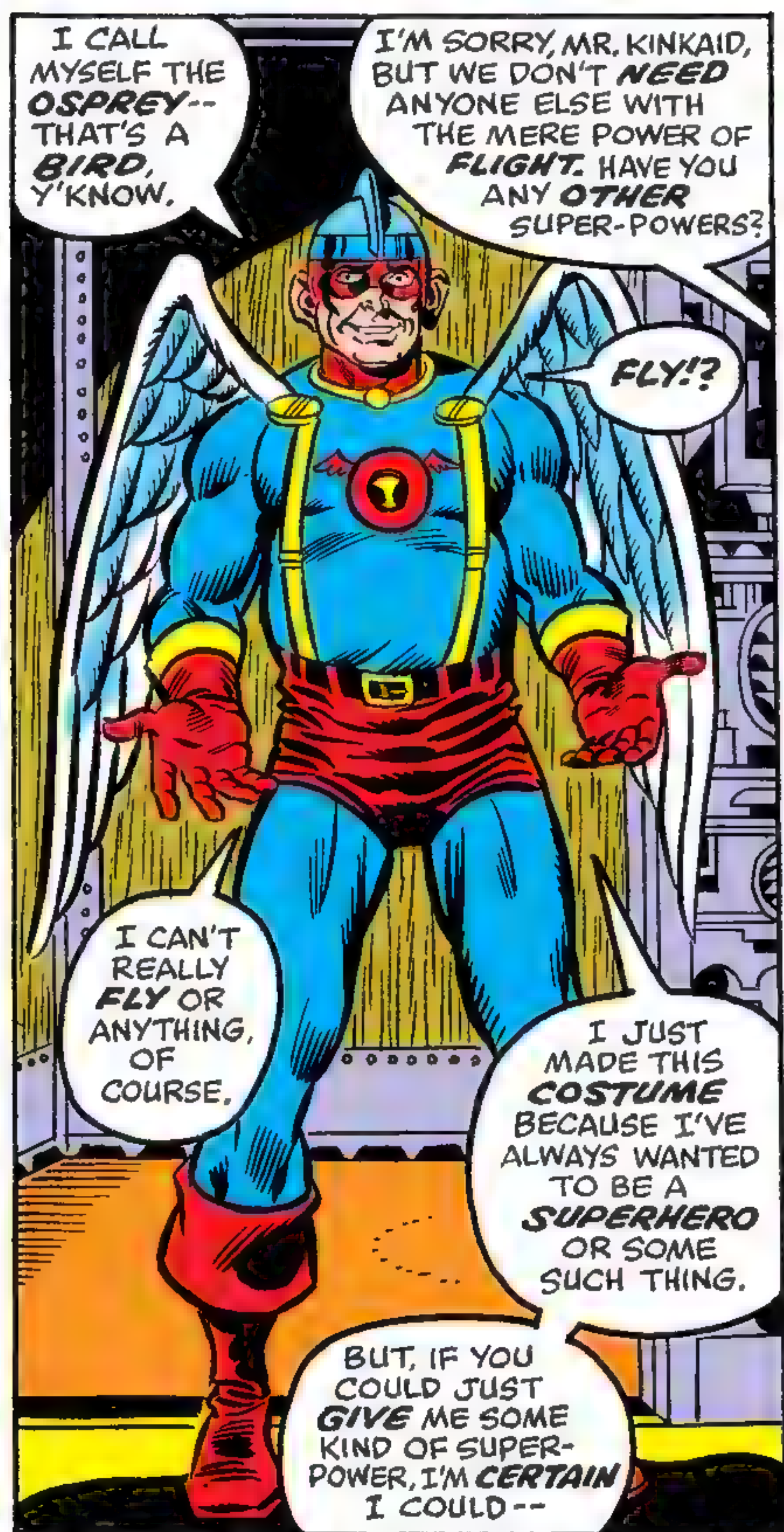
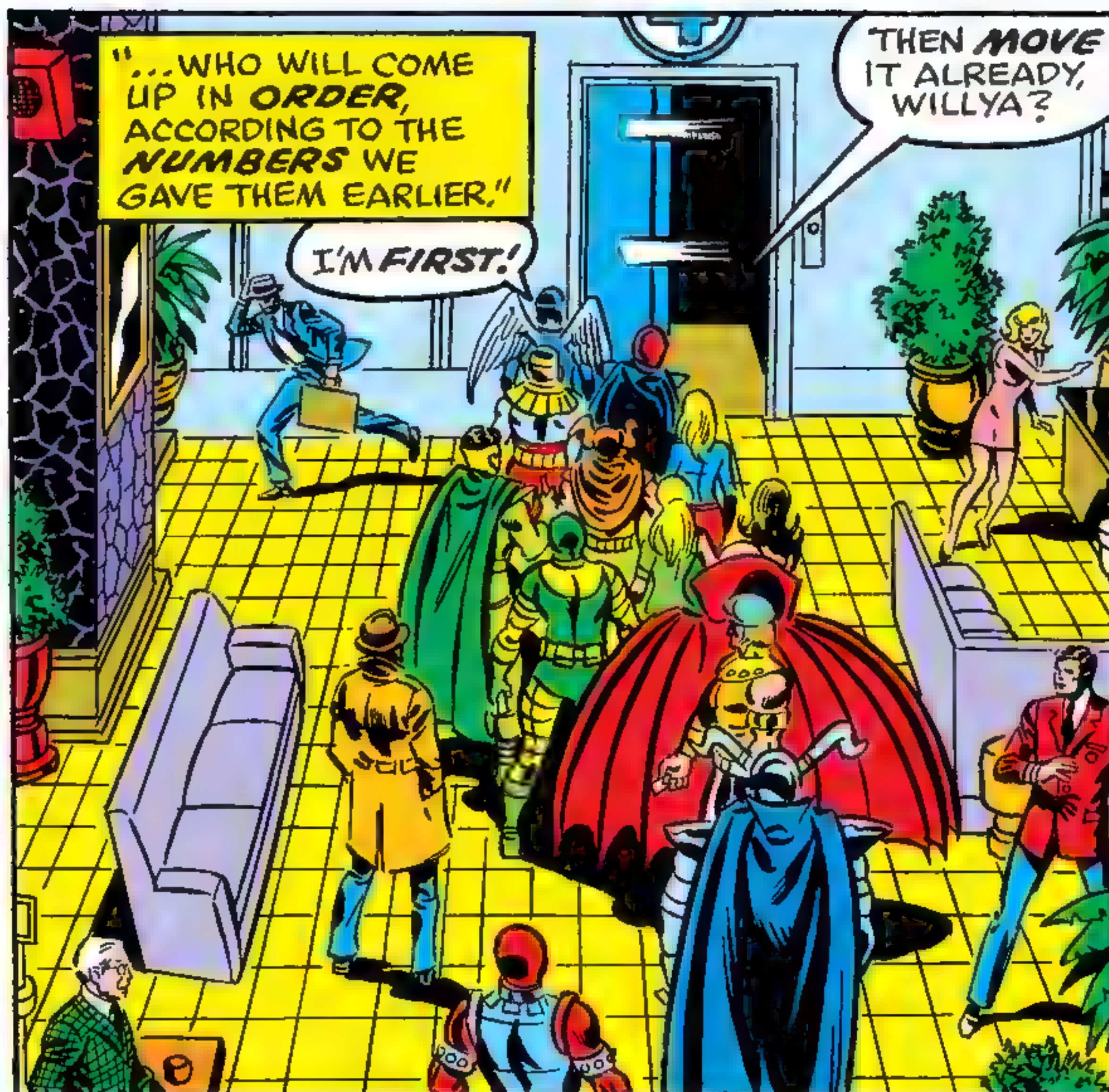
MARIE SEVERIN/ JOE ROSEN
COLORIST LETTERER













DON'T LOOK SO **ALARMED**, MY RELUCTANT GUESTS; MY ANTI-GRAVITY DISC WILL SET HIM DOWN **SAFELY**-- ALBEIT IN THE **SOUTH BRONX**. BUT NOW--

ATTENTION, ALL APPLICANTS--

ALL THOSE WITHOUT TRUE **SUPER-POWERS** NEED NOT APPLY-- OR ELSE!



YER LITTLE IDEA'S A REAL **BUST** SO FAR, AIN'T IT, WIZ?

SHUDDUP, YOU-- BEFORE I TURN YA LOOSE AN' WORK YOU OVER!

NOW WHY DON'T YOU JUST DO THAT LITTLE THING!



HOLD IT, YOU TWO! THE **ELEVATOR DOOR'S** OPENING AGAIN.

HERE COMES THE **NEXT**--



WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN WAS THAT?

AND--WHO ARE YOU??



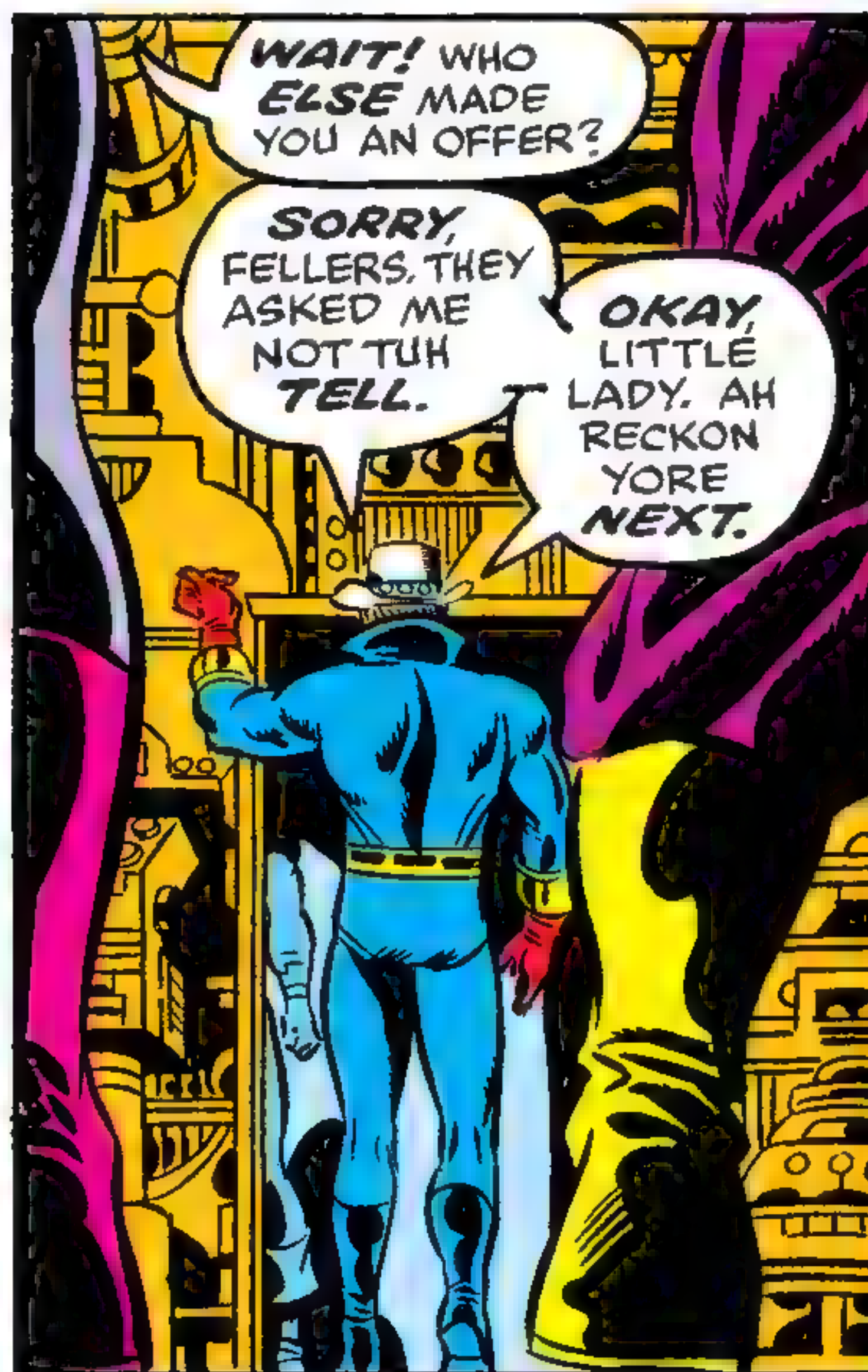
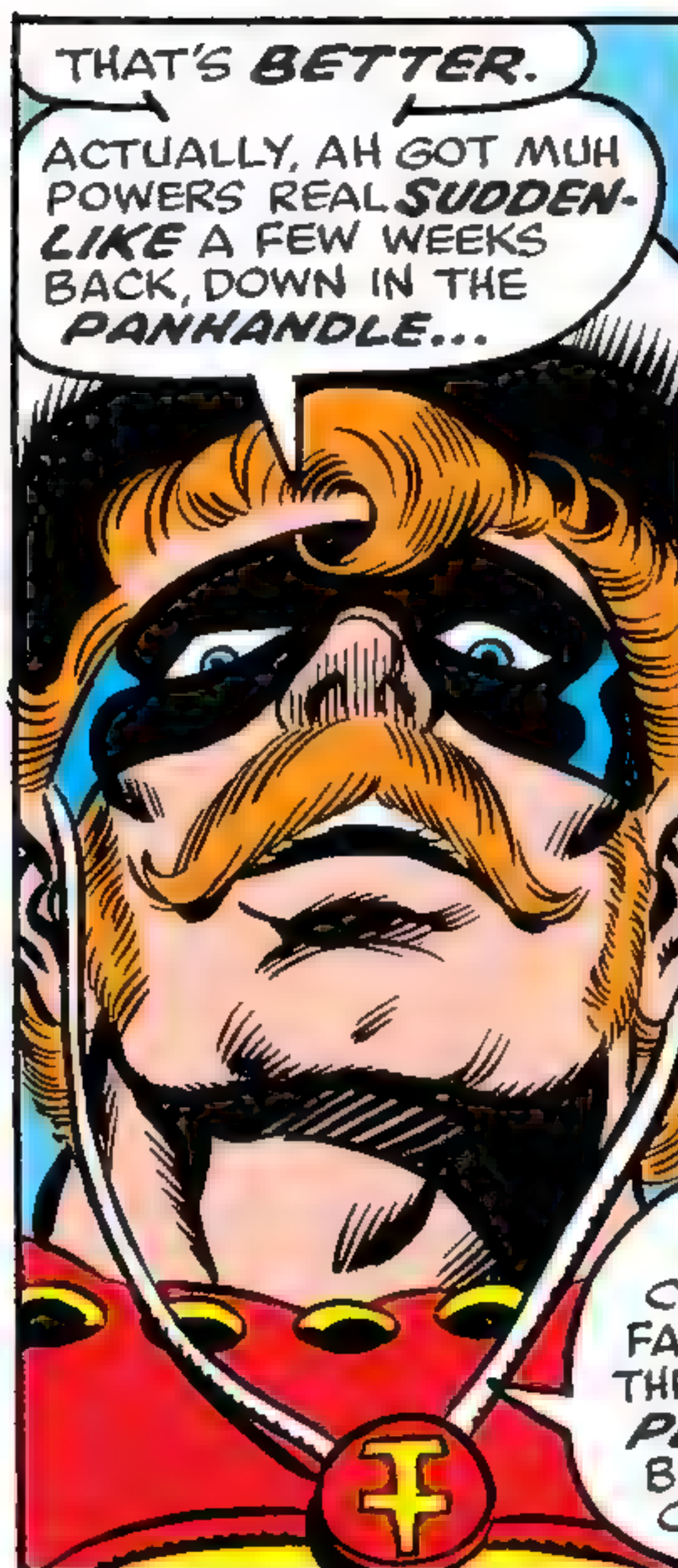
THE ANSWER TUH **BOTH** THEM QUESTIONS, IS THE **SAME**, PARDNER.

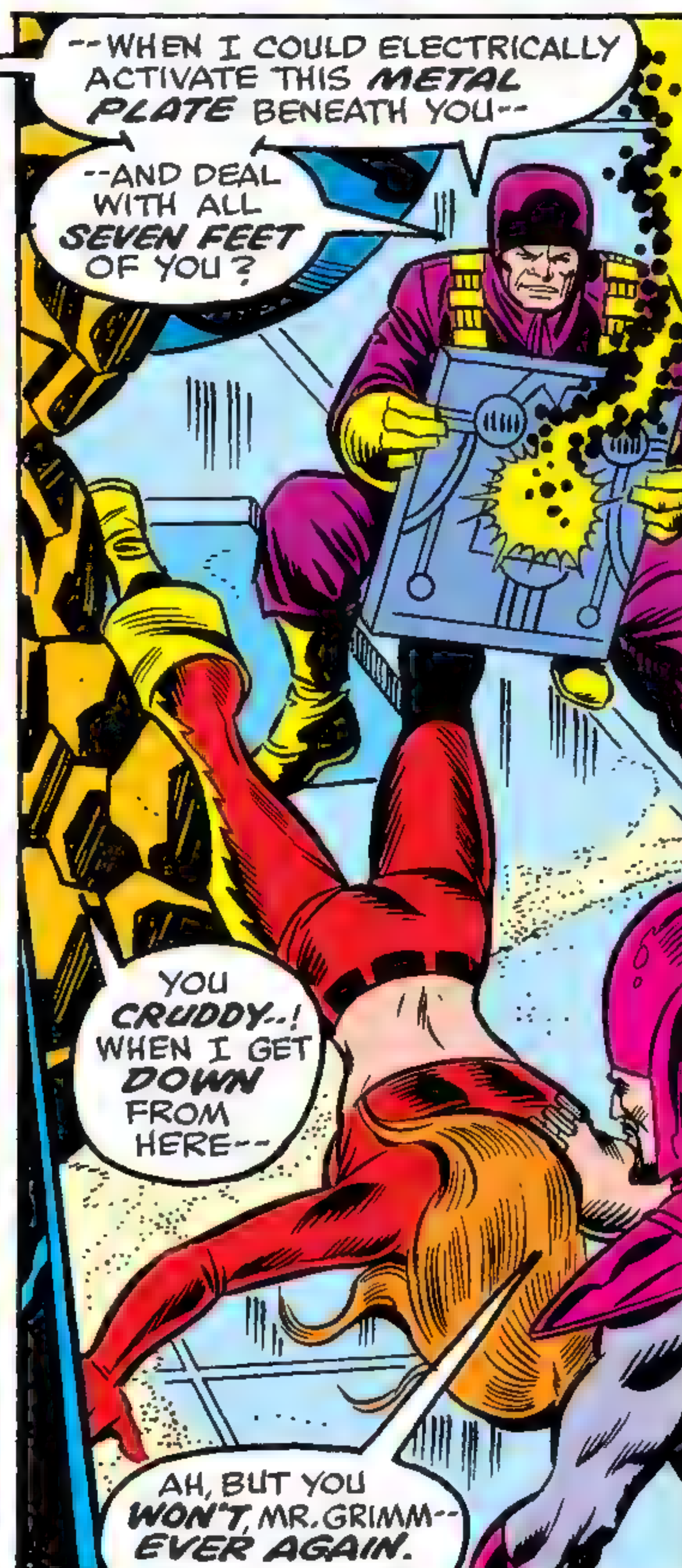
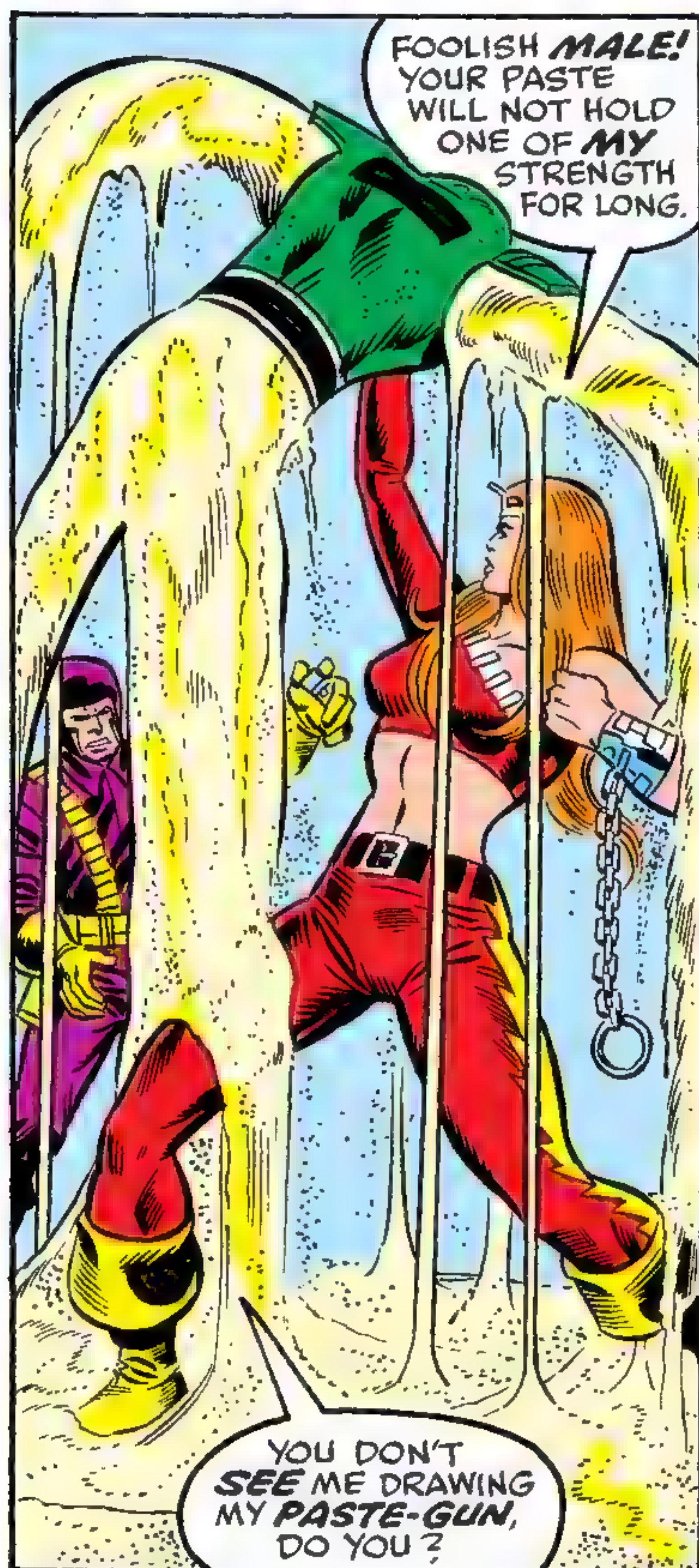
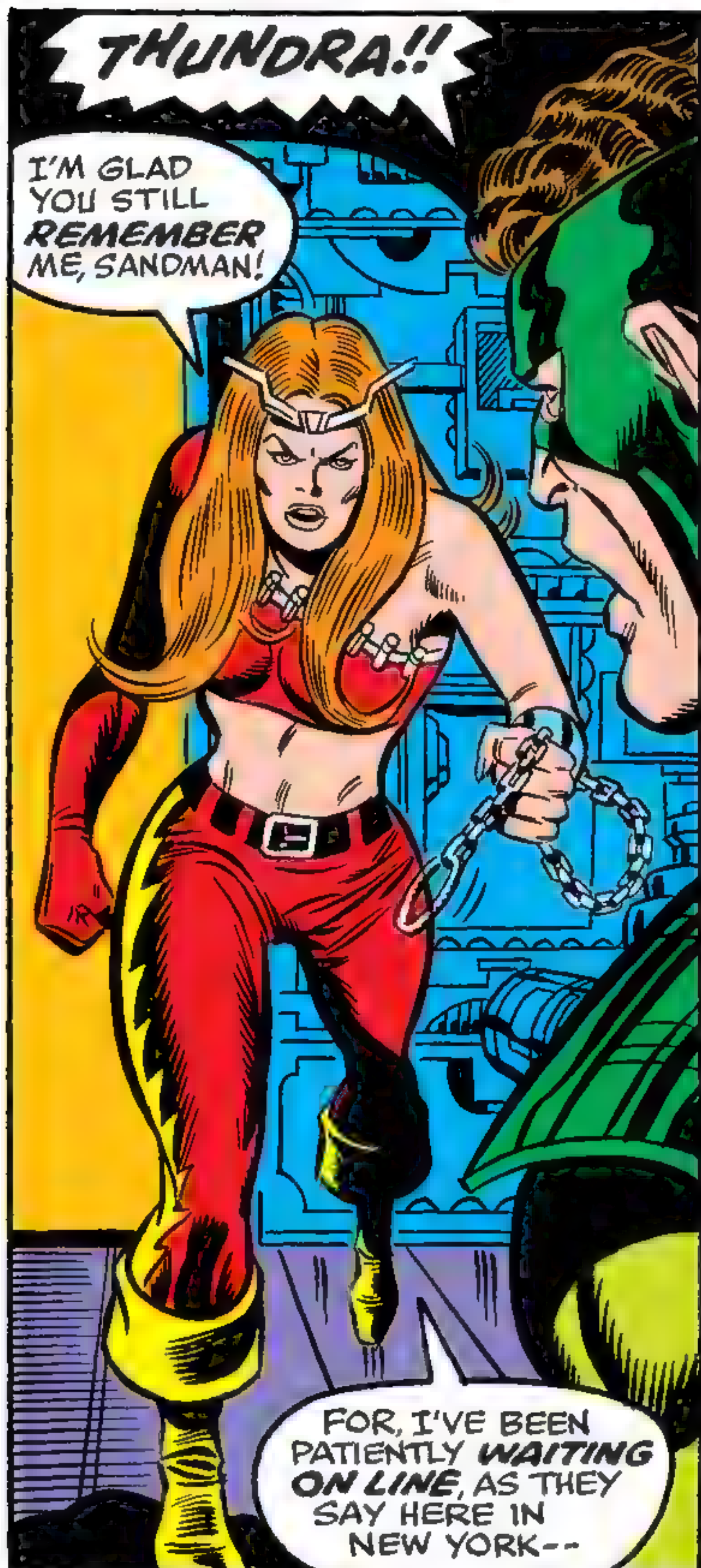
FOLKS CALL ME-- **THE TEXAS TWISTER!**

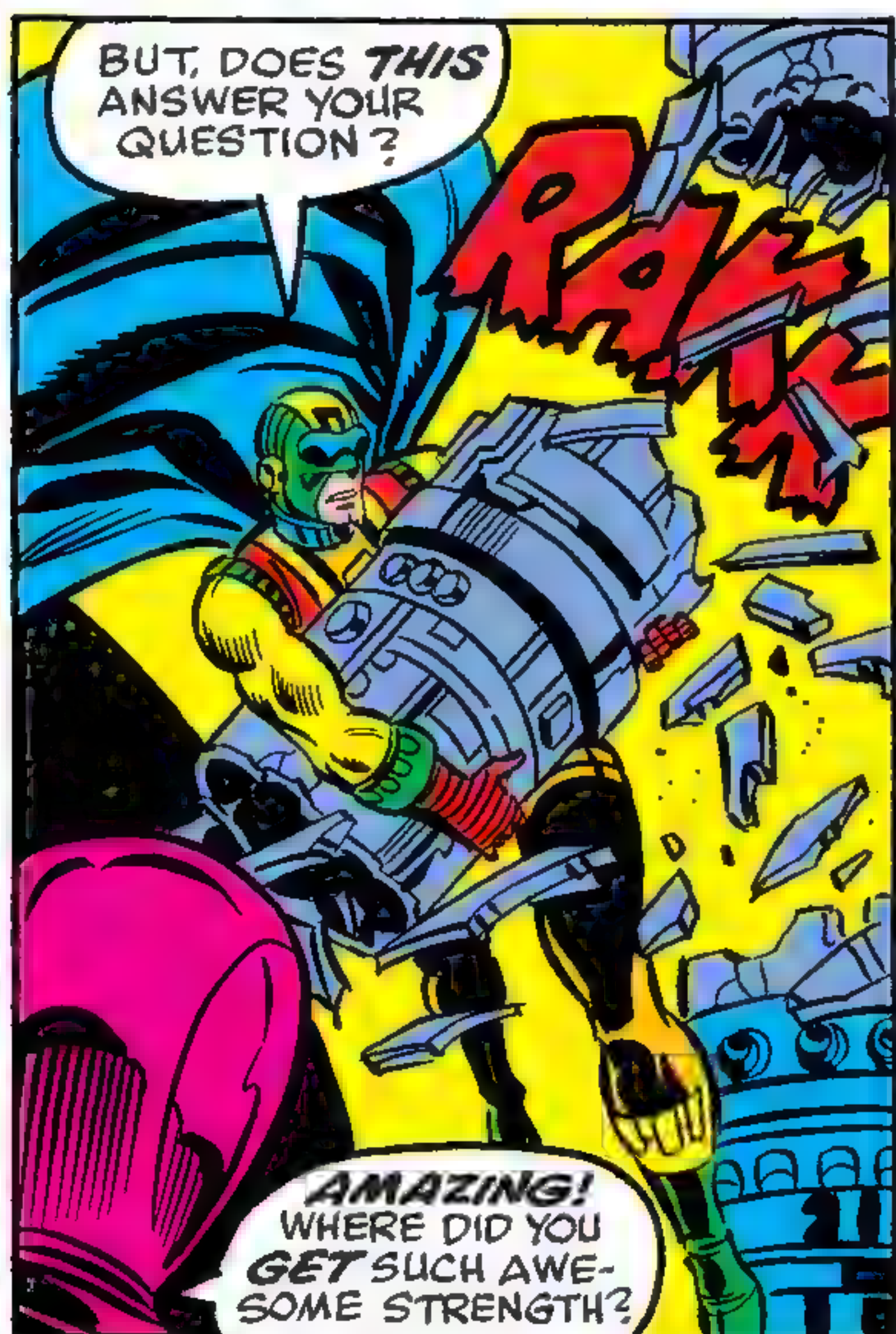
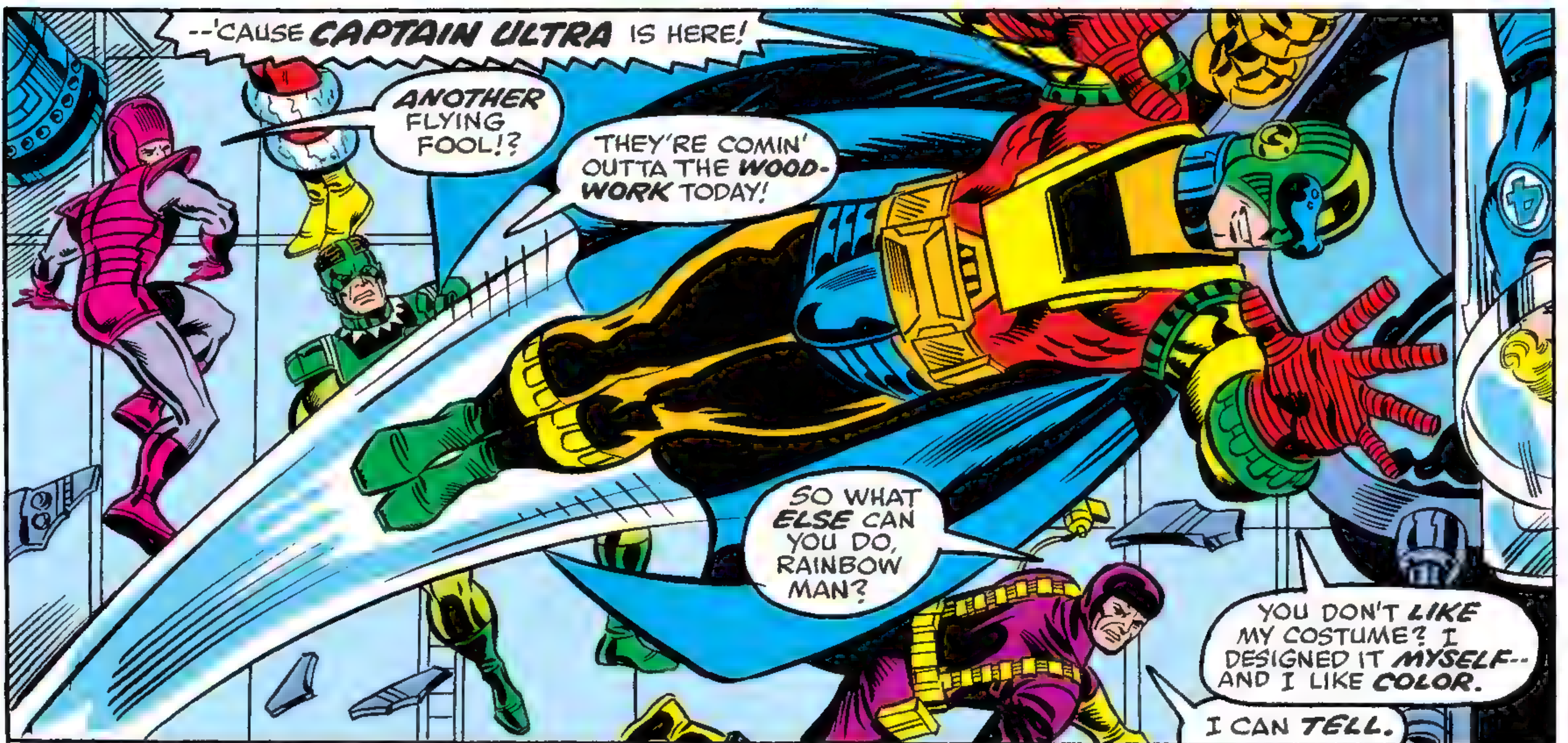
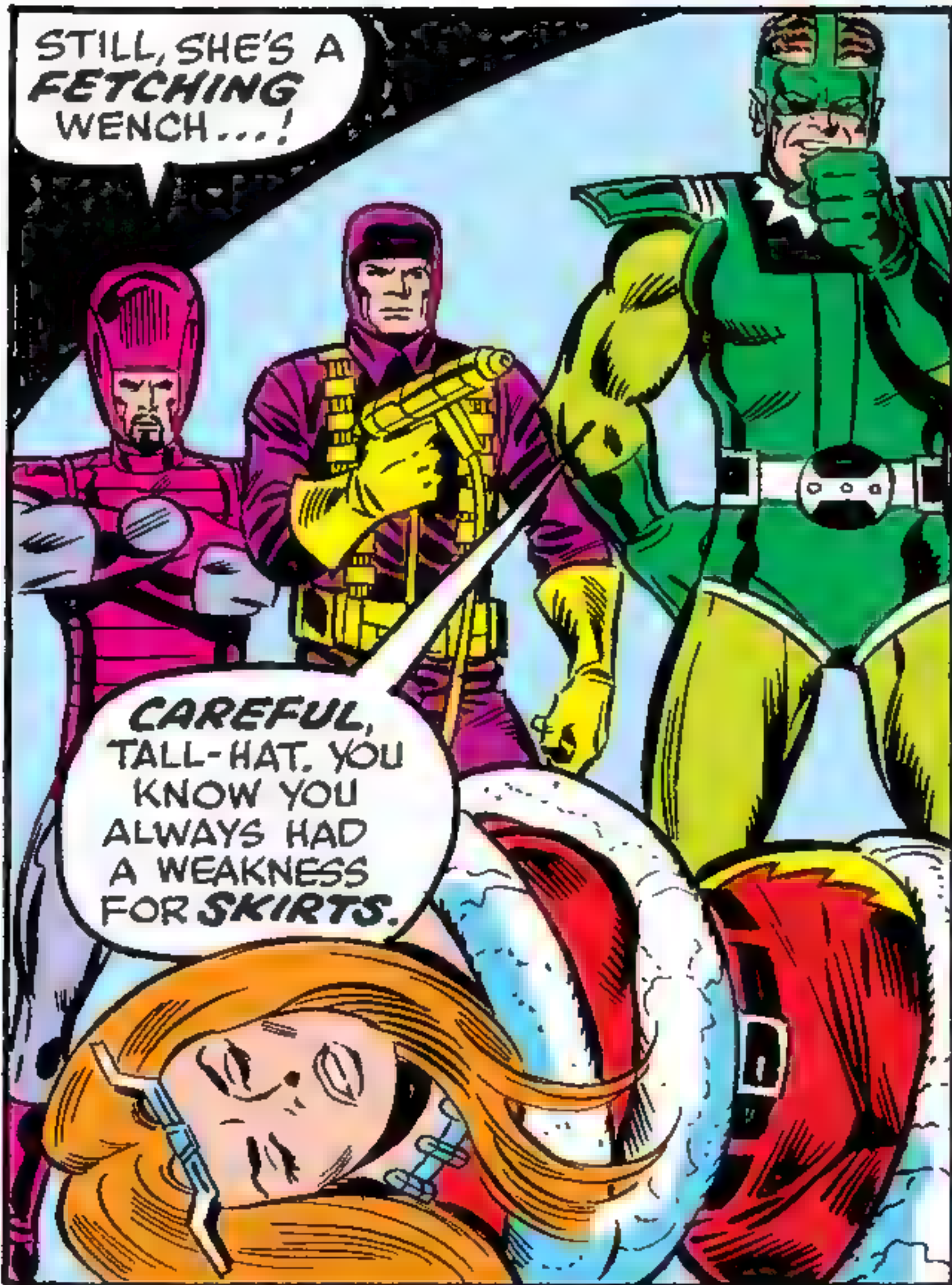
LEASTWAY, THEY **WILL** AS SOON AS THEY'VE **HEARD** OF ME.

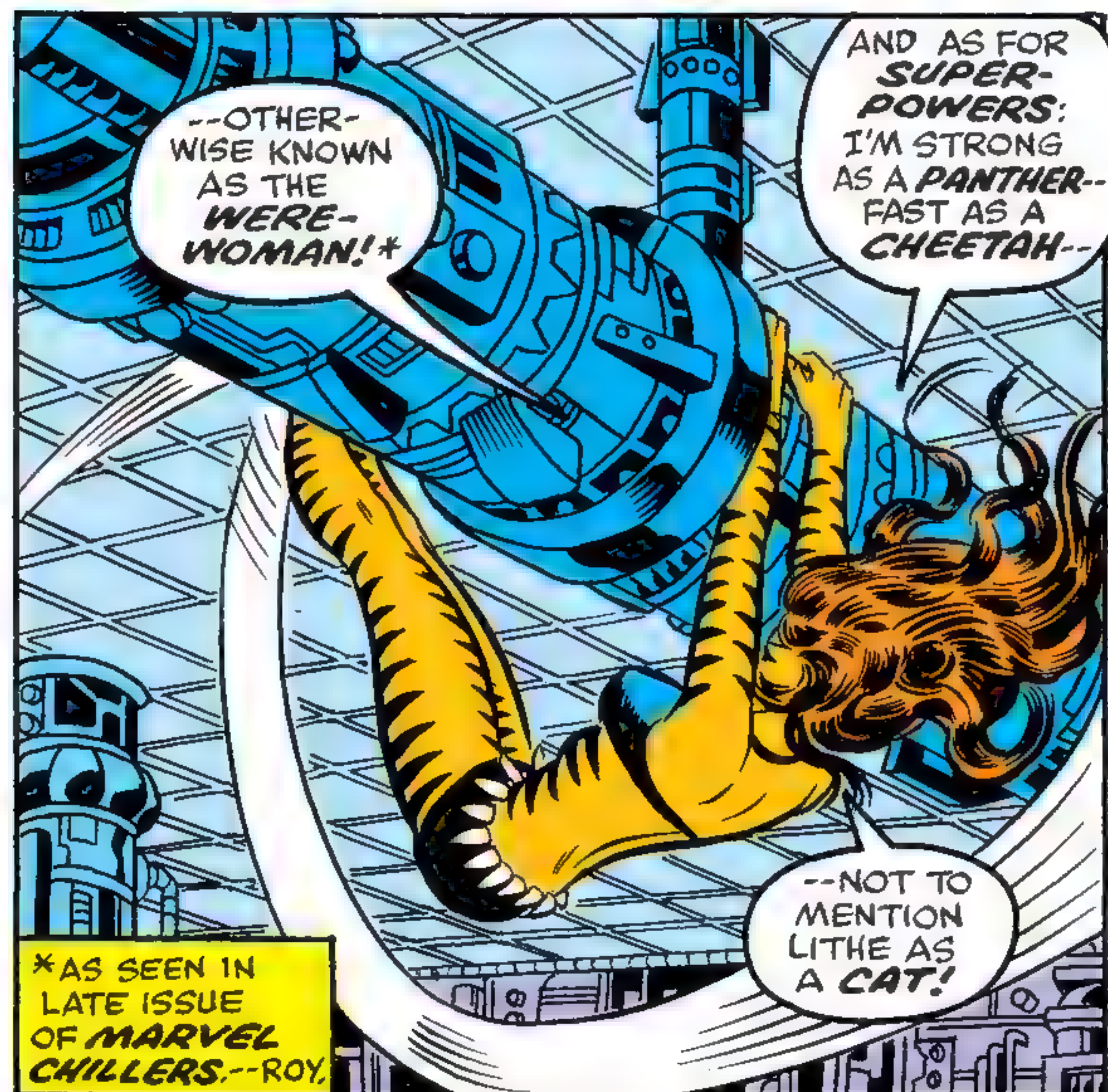
JUST WANTED TUH SHOW YUH **AN'VE** GOT REAL **SUPER-POWERS**, EVEN IF THAT OTHER HOMBRE **DIDN'T!**

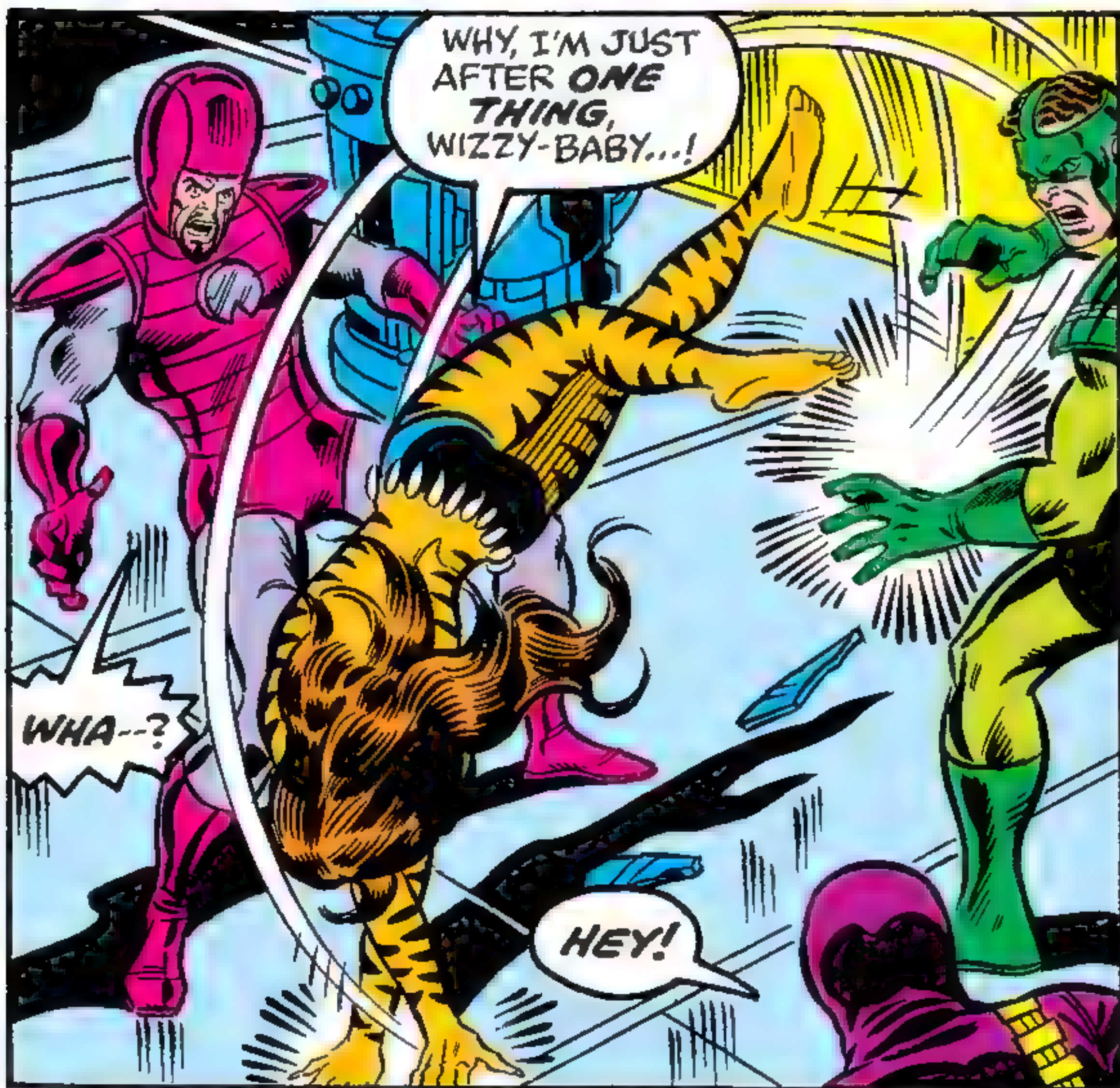
RECKON AH MADE MUH **POINT.**

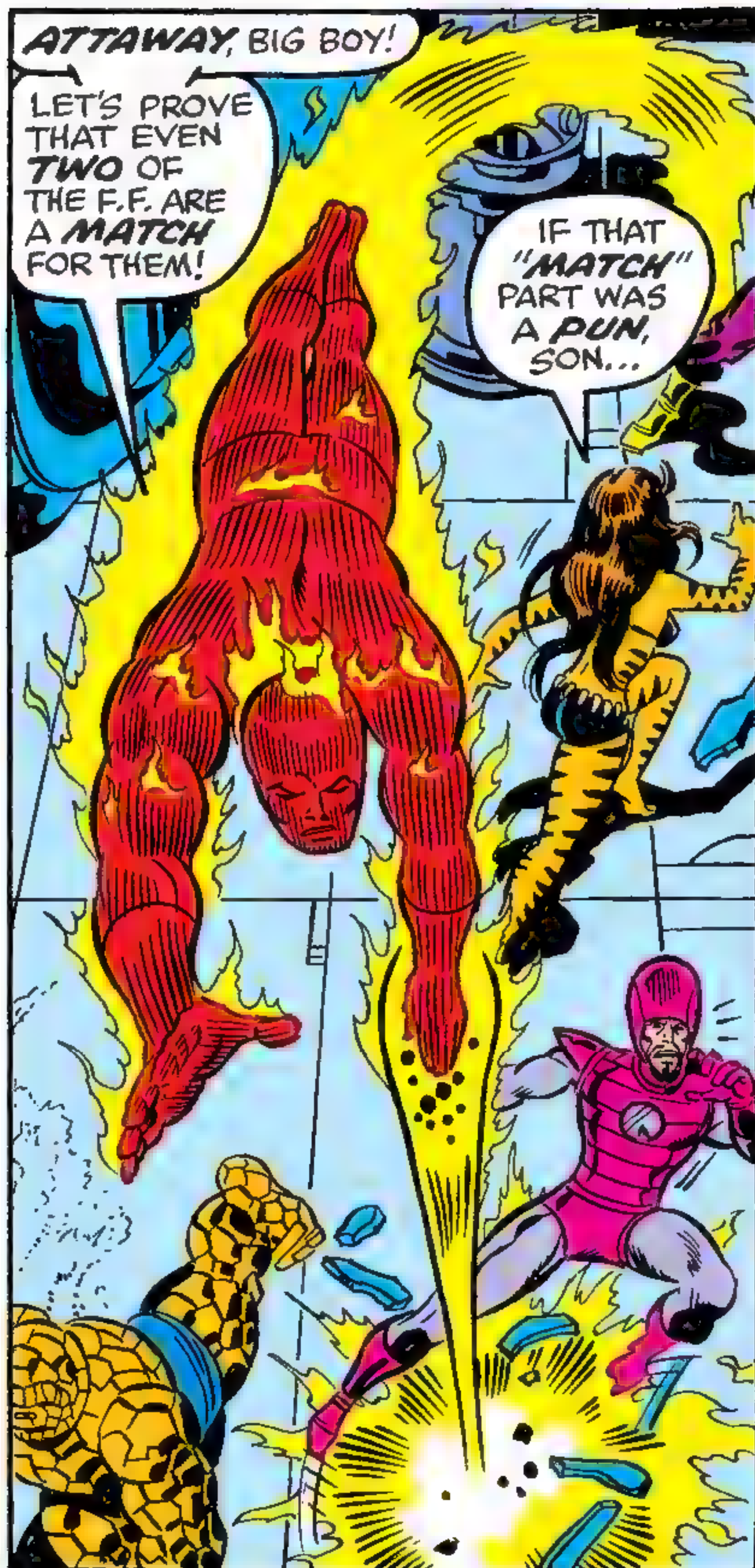












ATTAWAY, BIG BOY!

LET'S PROVE THAT EVEN TWO OF THE F.F. ARE A **MATCH** FOR THEM!

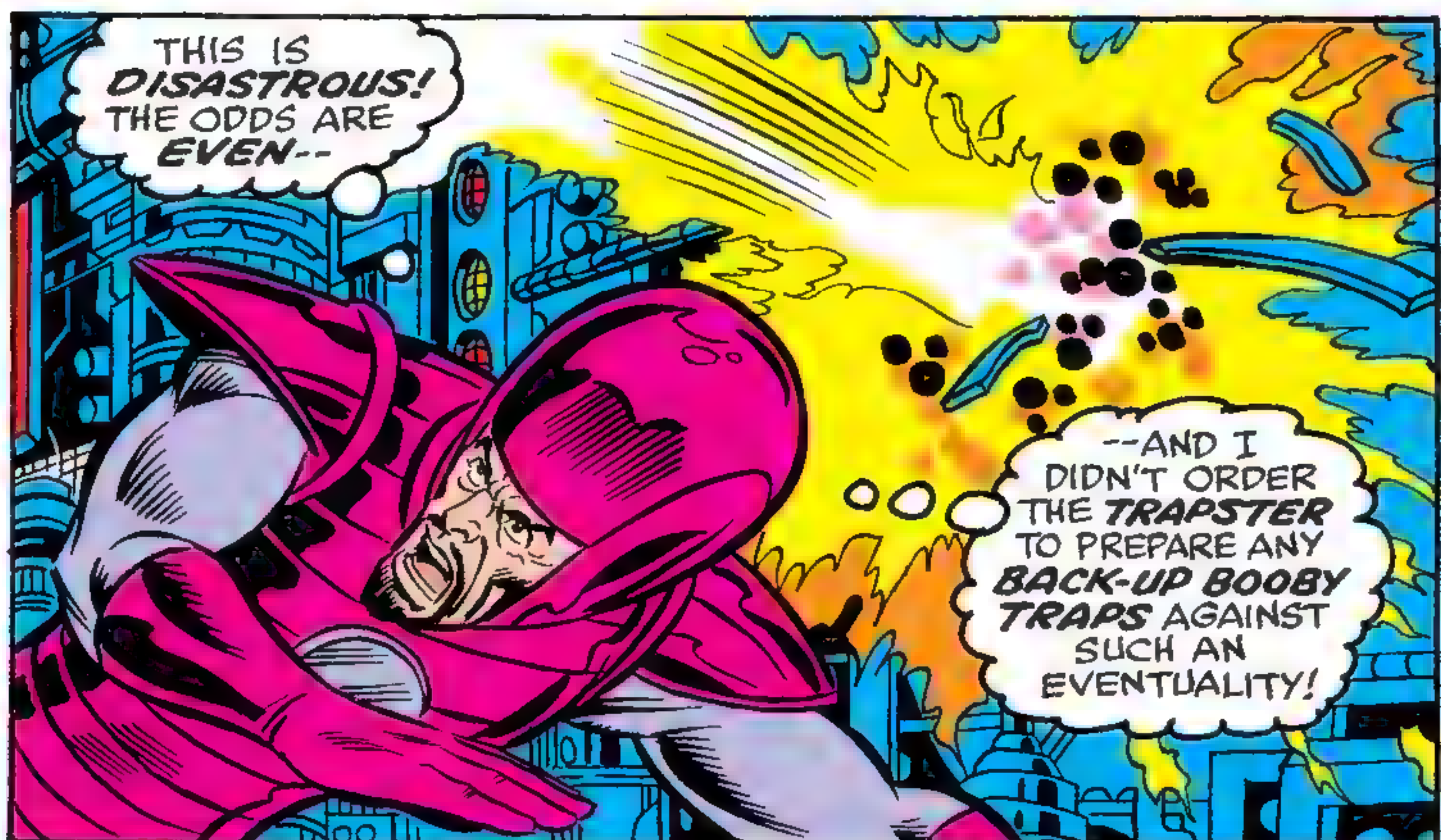
IF THAT "**MATCH**" PART WAS A **PUN**, SON...



...I'VE GOT TO SAY THAT IT LACKS **PUNCH**!

YOU OUGHTTA **KNOW**, LADY! **WOW!**

WOK!



THIS IS **DISASTROUS!** THE ODDS ARE **EVEN--**

--AND I DIDN'T ORDER THE **TRAPSTER** TO PREPARE ANY **BACK-UP BOOBY TRAPS** AGAINST SUCH AN **EVENTUALITY!**

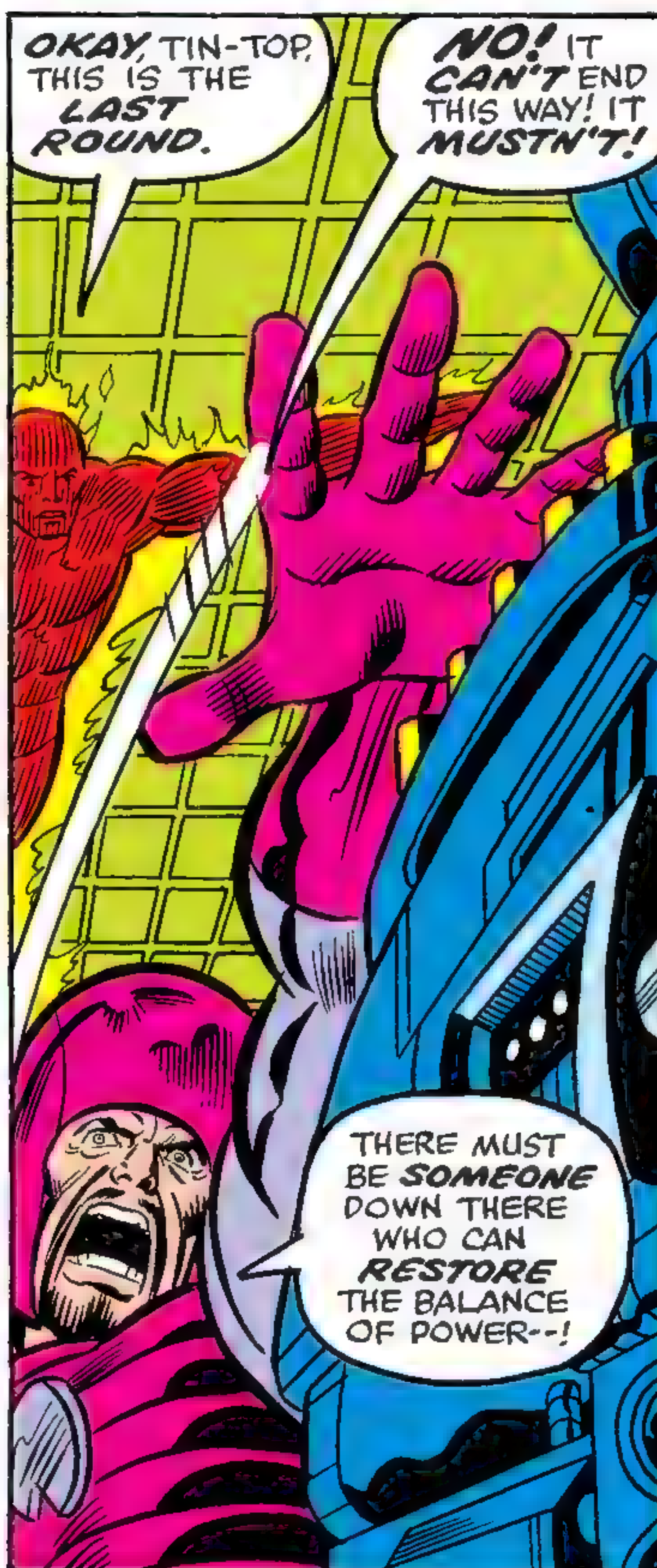


ATILLA H. HUN! YOU GOTTA **FALL!** YOU GOTTA!

SEZ **WHO**, SAND-PILE?

BEN DOESN'T **REALIZE** IT IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE-- BUT THAT BLOW WOULD AT LEAST HAVE **FAZED** HIM, NOT LONG AGO.

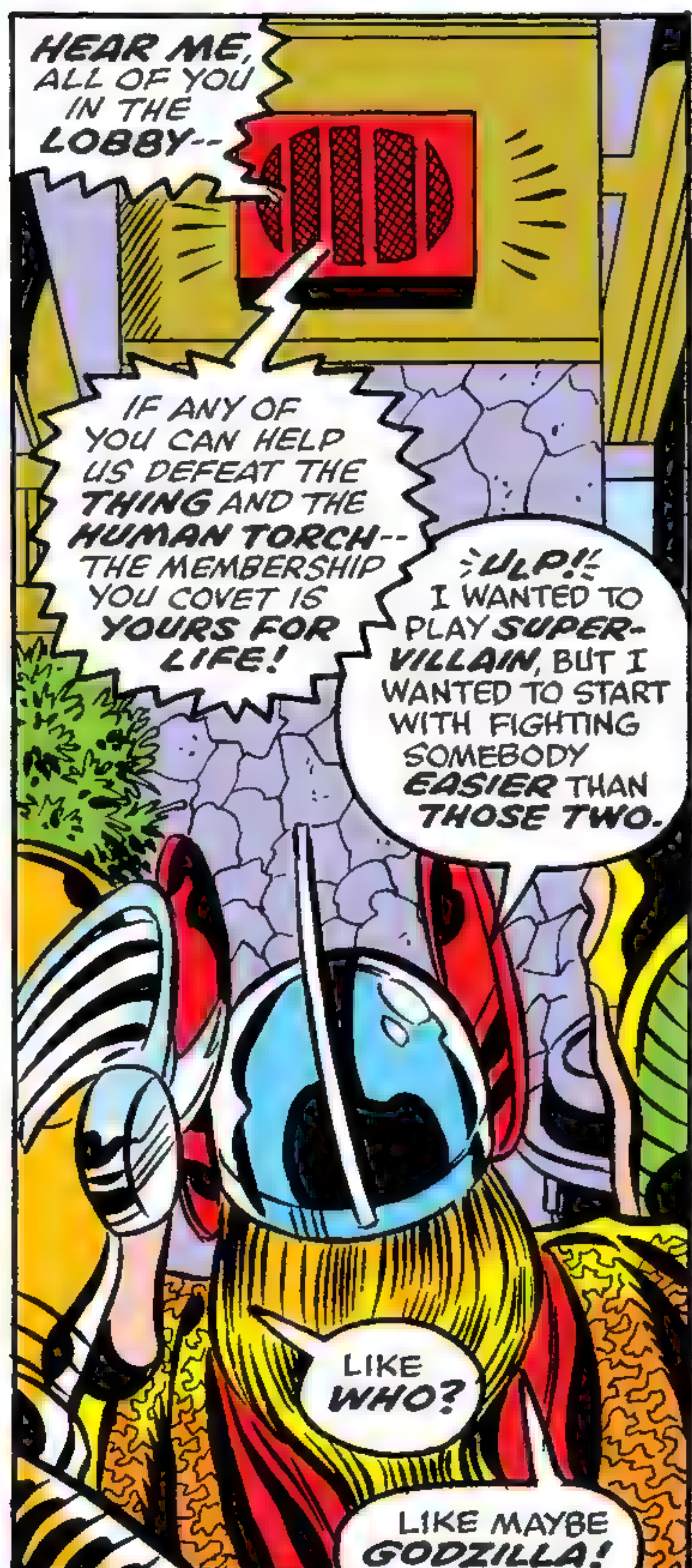
IF ONLY **SUE** AND I COULD **HELP--!**



OKAY, TIN-TOP, THIS IS THE **LAST ROUND.**

NO! IT CAN'T END THIS WAY! IT **MUSTN'T!**

THERE MUST BE **SOMEONE** DOWN THERE WHO CAN **RESTORE** THE **BALANCE** OF **POWER--!**



HEAR ME, ALL OF YOU IN THE **LOBBY--**

IF ANY OF YOU CAN HELP US DEFEAT THE **THING** AND THE **HUMAN TORCH**-- THE **MEMBERSHIP** YOU COVET IS **YOURS FOR LIFE!**

UPL! I WANTED TO PLAY **SUPER-VILLAIN**, BUT I WANTED TO START WITH FIGHTING SOMEBODY **EASIER** THAN THOSE TWO.

LIKE **WHO?**

LIKE MAYBE **GODZILLA!**



NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I **DO** HAVE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT-- IN **PEORIA!**

DON'T WE **ALL!**

NOW YOU LEAVE-- WHILE THEY'RE **WRECKING** MY BUILDING!



WELL? AREN'T YOU GOING TO TURN TAIL AND RUN, LIKE EVERYBODY **ELSE?**

I'M-- **NOT** LIKE-- EVERYONE ELSE.

WHY ARE YOU STANDING THERE **SHAKING?**

I'M NOT **SHAKING**, YOU FOOL--



I'M **GROWING!**

RRIP

UH OH!



YOU DON'T **RECOGNIZE** ME, DO YOU?

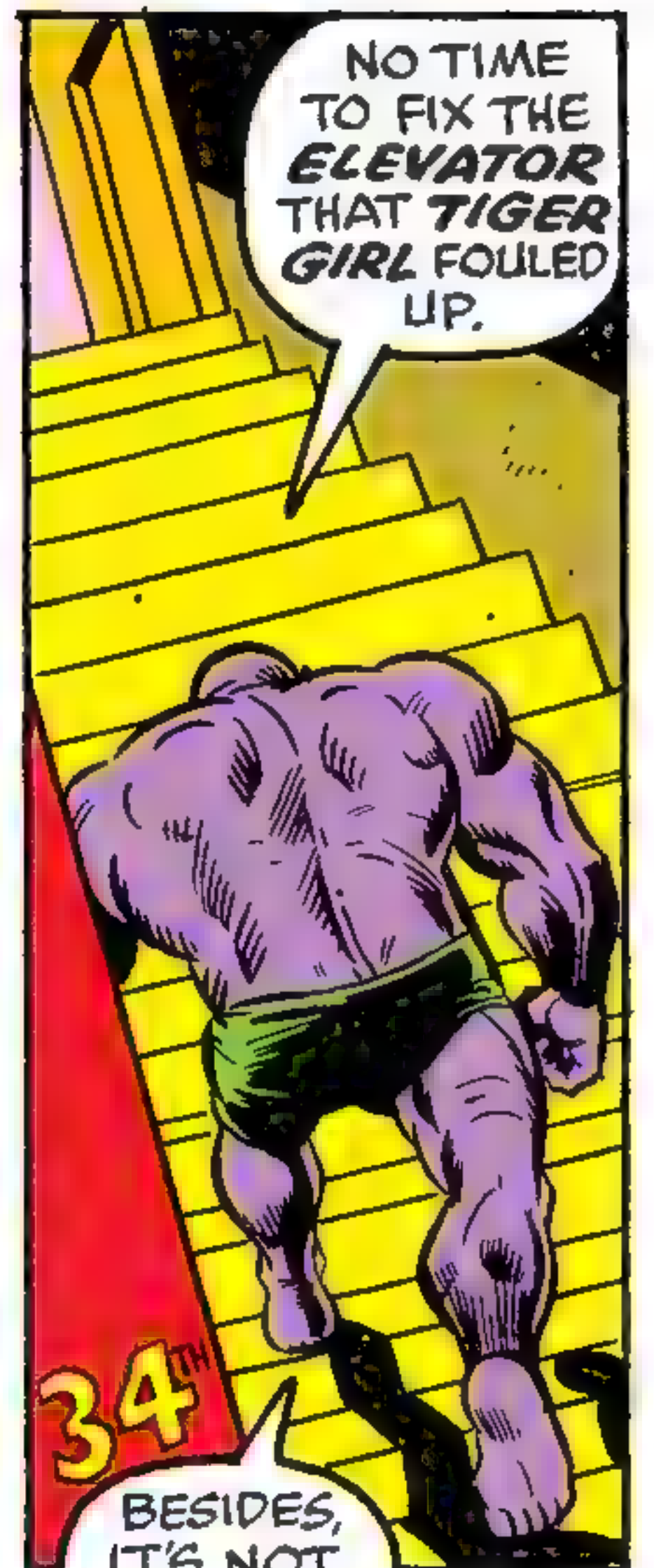
WELL, AFTER TODAY, YOU **WILL!**

AFTER TODAY, THE WHOLE **WORLD** WILL **RECOGNIZE** AND **TREMBLE** AT THE SIGHT OF-- **THE BRUTE!**



MR. COLLINS! MR. COLLINS!?

YOU CAN **WAKE UP** NOW! HE'S **GONE!**



NO TIME TO FIX THE **ELEVATOR** THAT **TIGER GIRL** FOULED UP.

34

BESIDES, IT'S NOT FAR UP.



HUH? IF YOU'RE ONE'A THEM **BRAND-ECHH** TYPE **REJECTS** FROM DOWN BELOW--

AND **NOW--!**

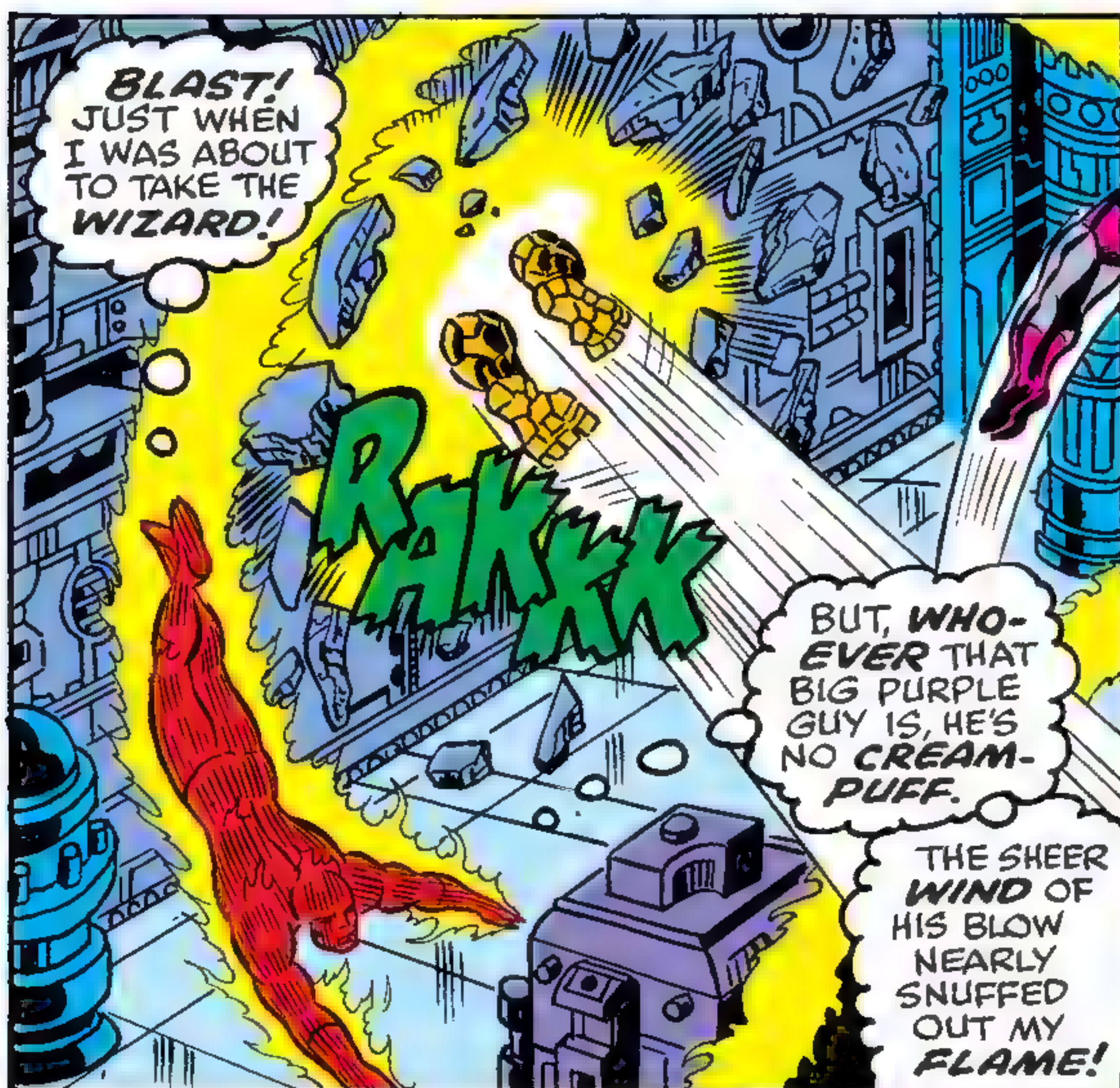
--MY ADVICE IS TA GET **OUTTA** HERE FAST, BEFORE YA GET **HURT.**



IT IS NOT **I** WHO AM IN DANGER OF **THAT**, YOU BRAINLESS GARGOYLE--

SKOK!

--BUT YOU!

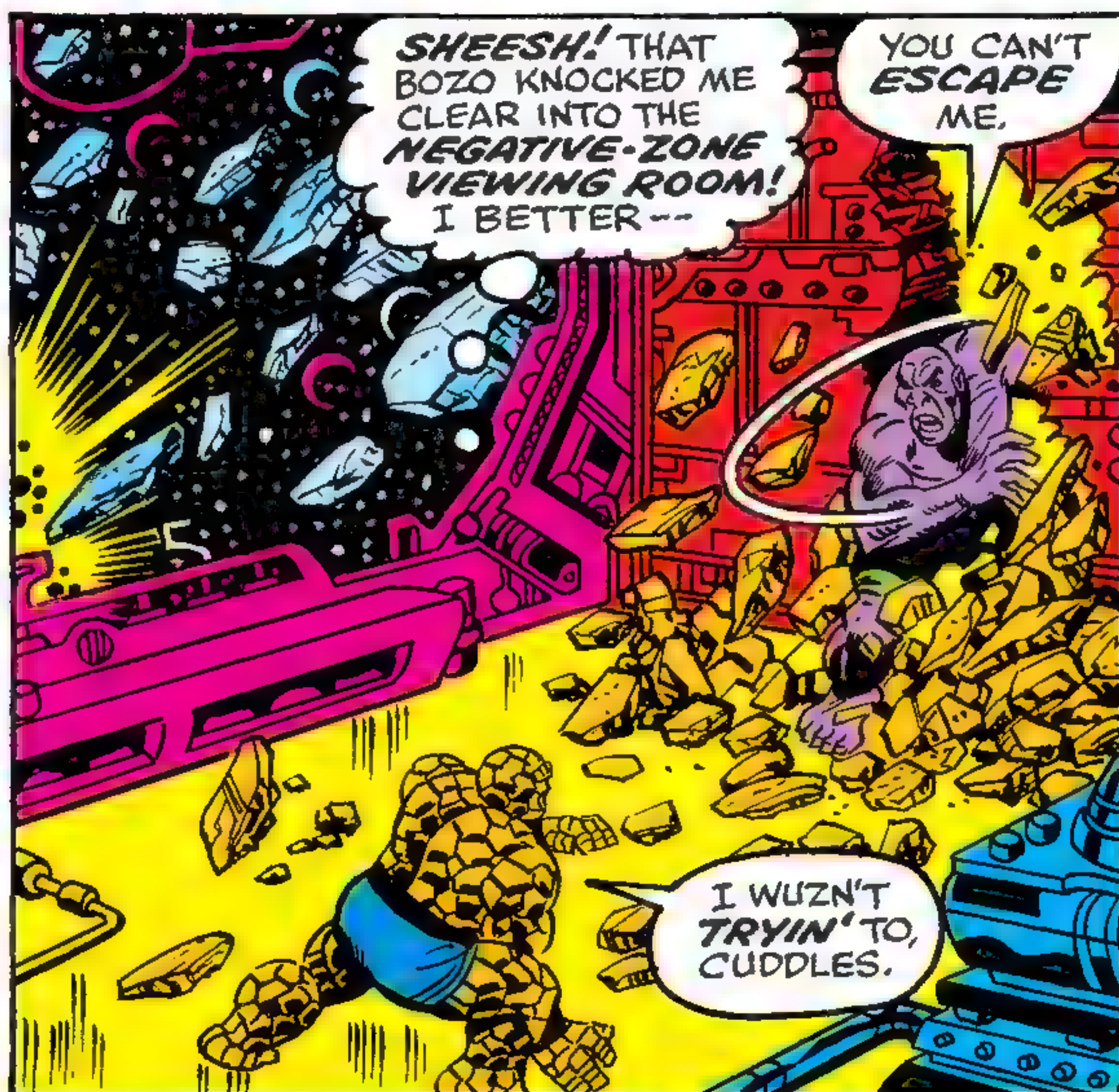


BLAST! JUST WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO TAKE THE **WIZARD!**

RAKXXX

BUT, WHO-EVER THAT BIG PURPLE GUY IS, HE'S NO **CREAM-PUFF**.

THE **SHEER WIND** OF HIS BLOW NEARLY **SNUFFED** OUT MY **FLAME!**



SHEESH! THAT **BOZO** KNOCKED ME CLEAR INTO THE **NEGATIVE-ZONE VIEWING ROOM!** I BETTER--

YOU CAN'T **ESCAPE** ME.

I **WUZN'T TRYIN'** TO, CUDDLES.



FACT IS, I BEEN **WAITIN'** FOR YA--

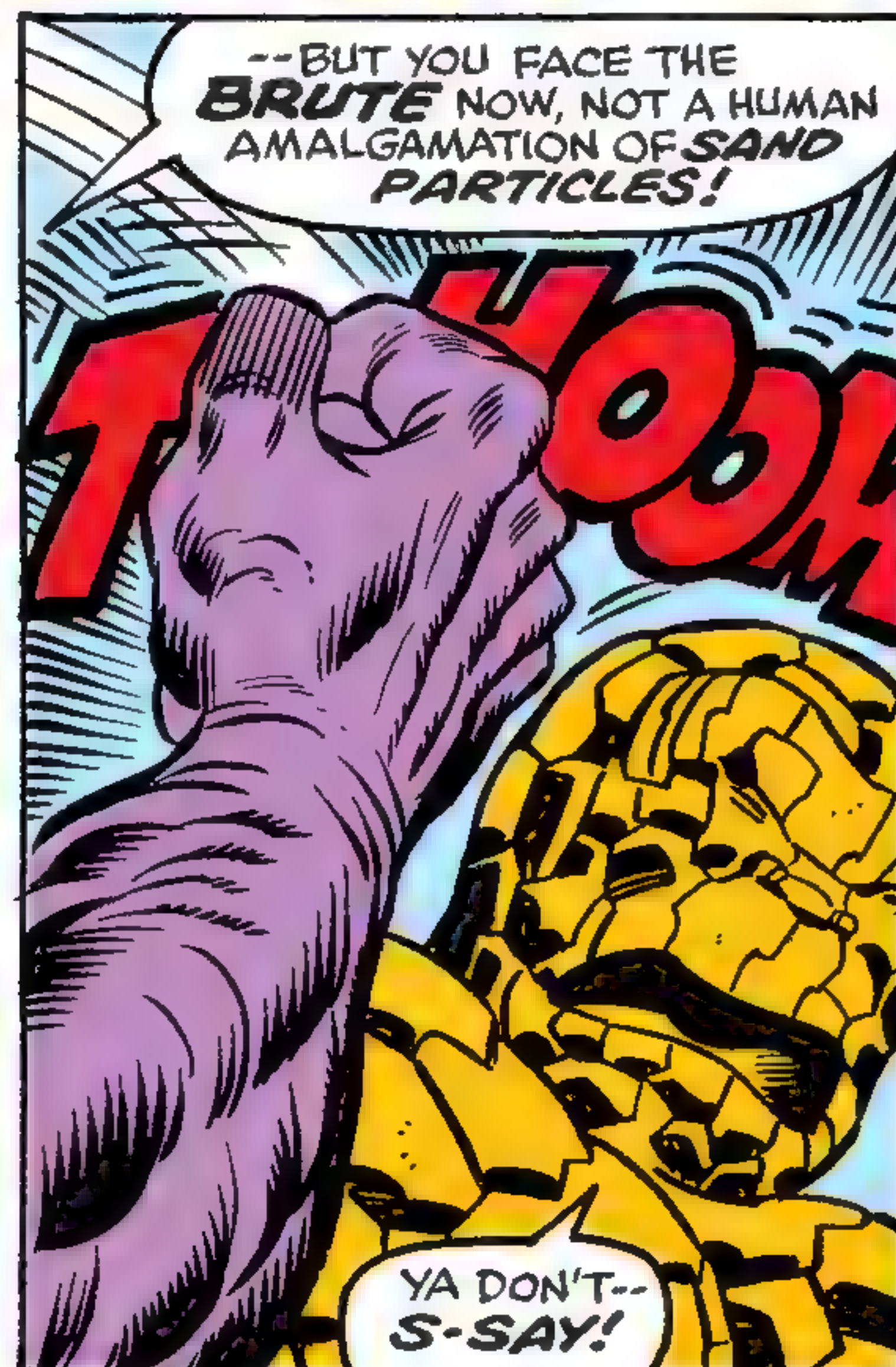
BROK!



--AN' **HERE'S** THE KIND'A PUNCH THAT SENT THE **SANDMAN** PLUMB NEAR TA **SLEEP CITY!**

SOX-KO-WI!

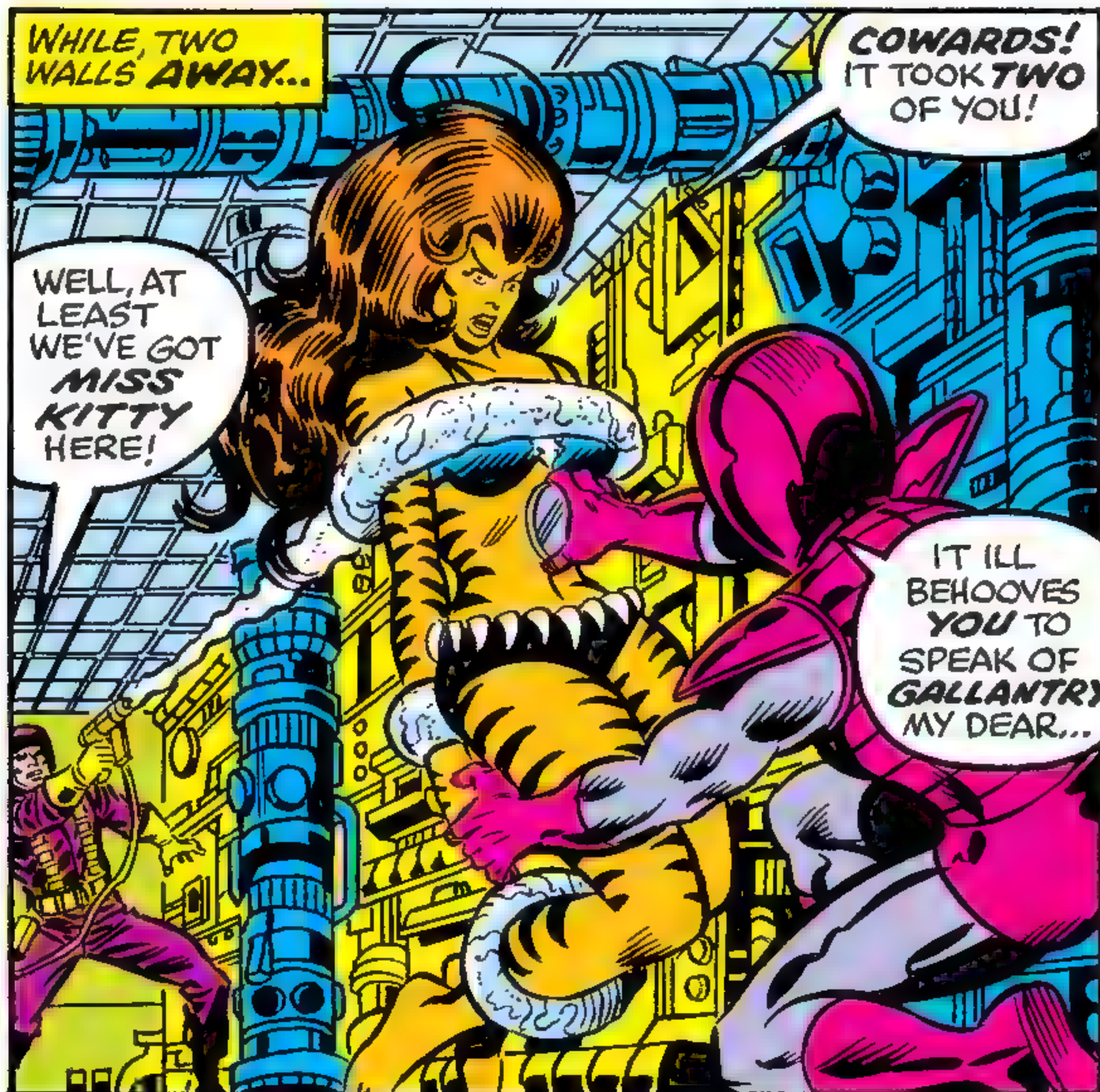
NOT **BAD**, I'LL ADMIT--



--BUT YOU FACE THE **BRUTE** NOW, NOT A HUMAN **AMALGAMATION** OF **SAND PARTICLES!**

THOOK!

YA **DON'T--S-SAY!**

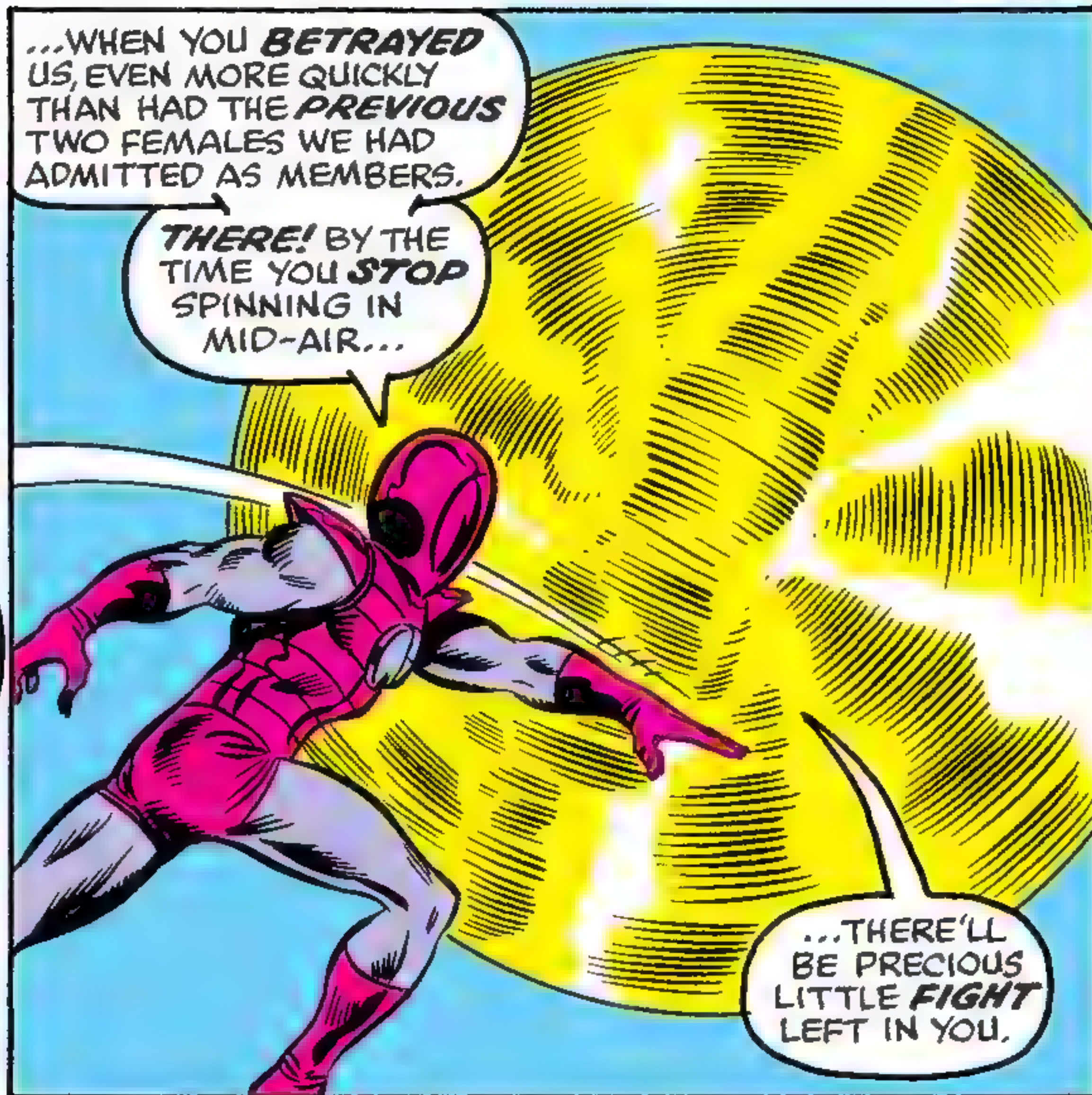


WHILE TWO WALLS AWAY...

WELL, AT LEAST WE'VE GOT MISS KITTY HERE!

COWARDS! IT TOOK TWO OF YOU!

IT ILL BEHOOVES YOU TO SPEAK OF GALLANTRY, MY DEAR...



...WHEN YOU BETRAYED US, EVEN MORE QUICKLY THAN HAD THE PREVIOUS TWO FEMALES WE HAD ADMITTED AS MEMBERS.

THERE! BY THE TIME YOU STOP SPINNING IN MID-AIR...

...THERE'LL BE PRECIOUS LITTLE FIGHT LEFT IN YOU.



I'LL HELP YOU, CAT-LADY! JUST--

MMFF!

FZAP!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN YER EYES OFF ME, HOTHEAD.

'CAUSE NOW I GOT IN MY SLEEPER PUNCH!



EXCELLENT! WE'VE DONE SO SPLENDIDLY, I'M ALL BUT TEMPTED TO SUGGEST WE FORGET A FOURTH MEMBER, AND RESTYLE OURSELVES "THE TERRIBLE TRIO!"

BUT THAT BIG PURPLE GUY WAS SURE SOMETHIN', HUH?



I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT HIM-- AND THE THING!

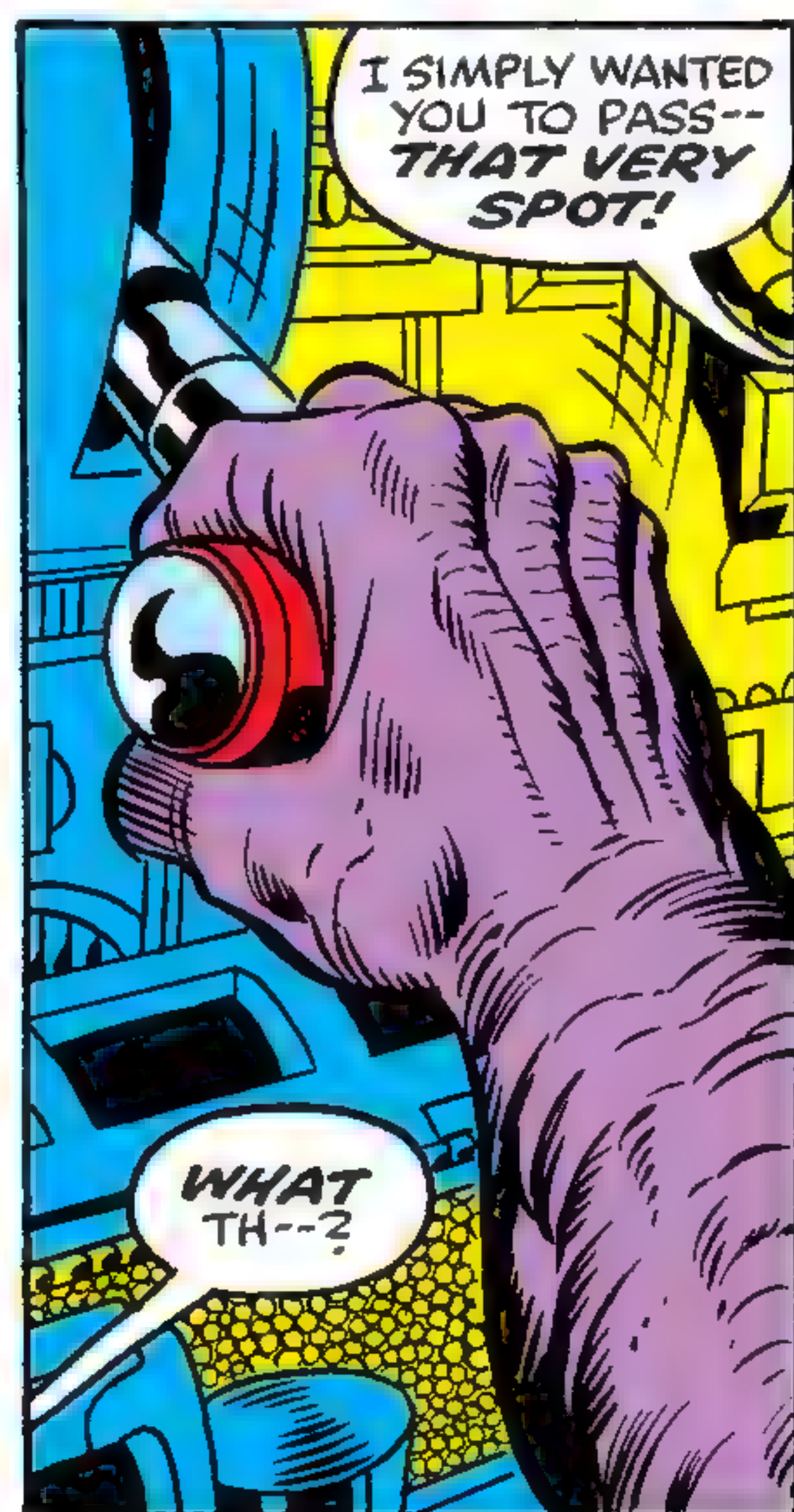
WE MUST FIND THEM-- JOIN FORCES AGAINST BEN GRIMM!



NOT COMIN' AFTER ME, HUH, HIGH-POCKETS?

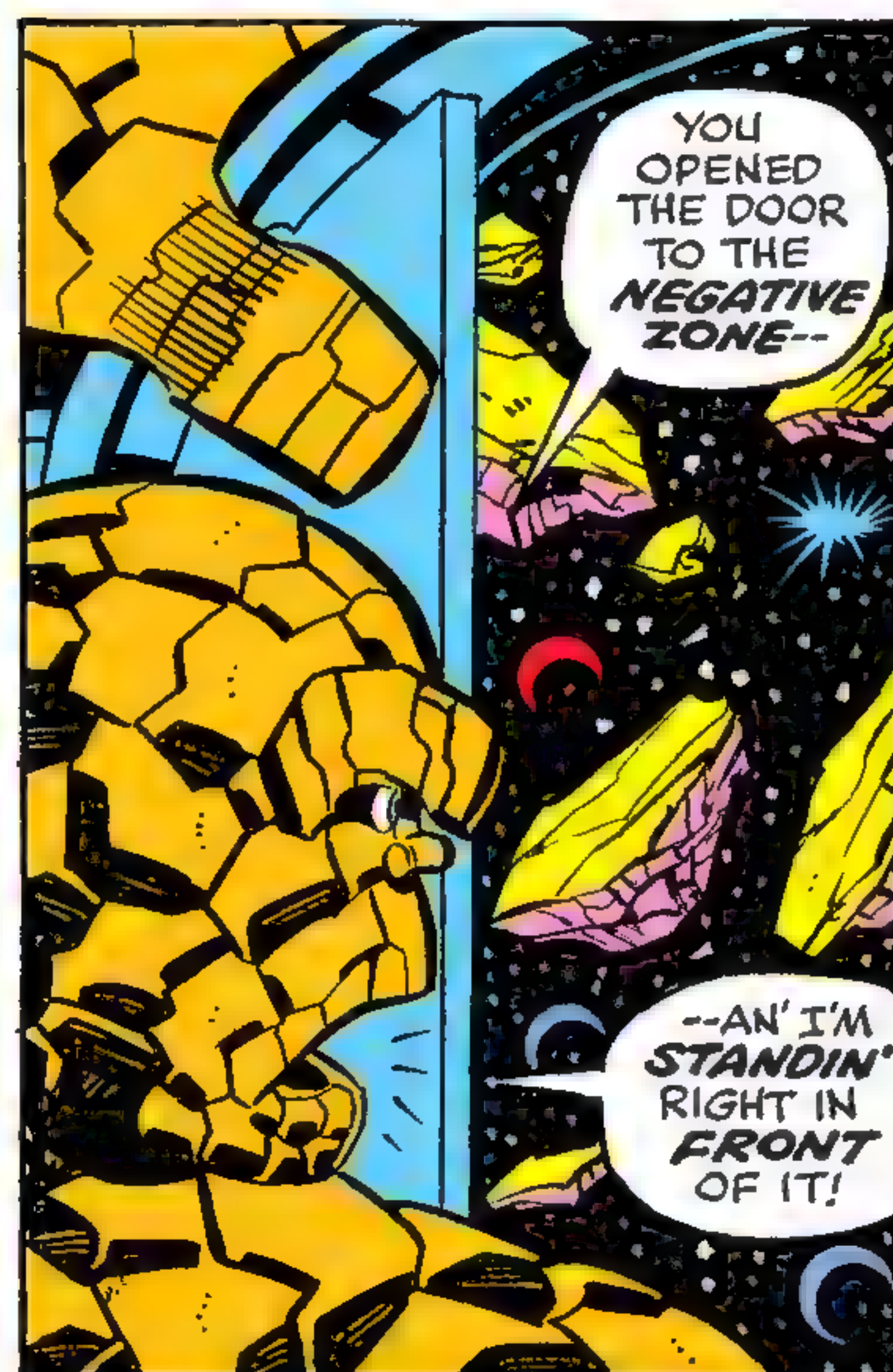
THEN I'LL DO THE WALKIN', JUST SO'S YOU WON'T THINK I'M SCARED OF YA.

THAT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME FOR A MOMENT, THING...



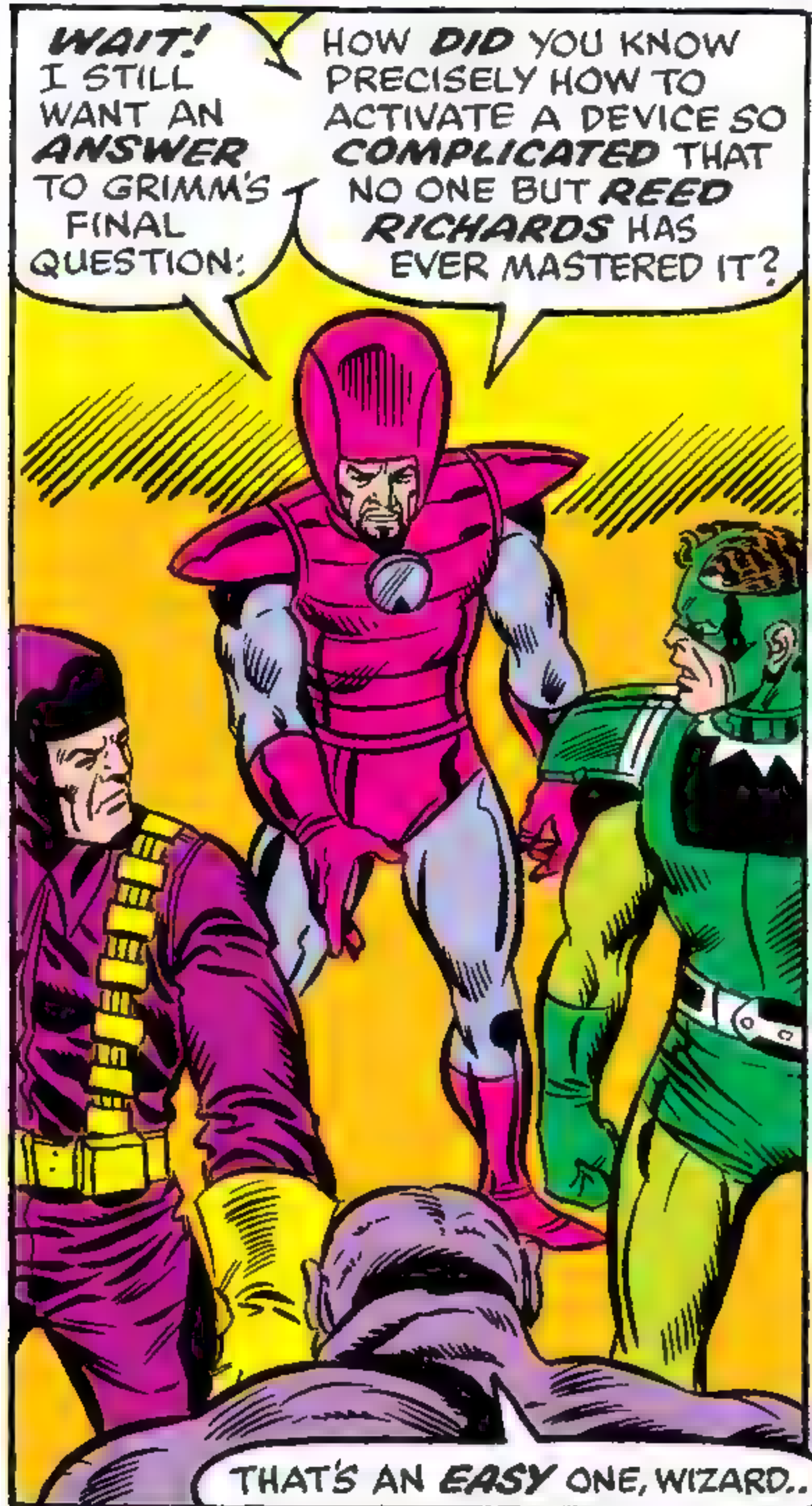
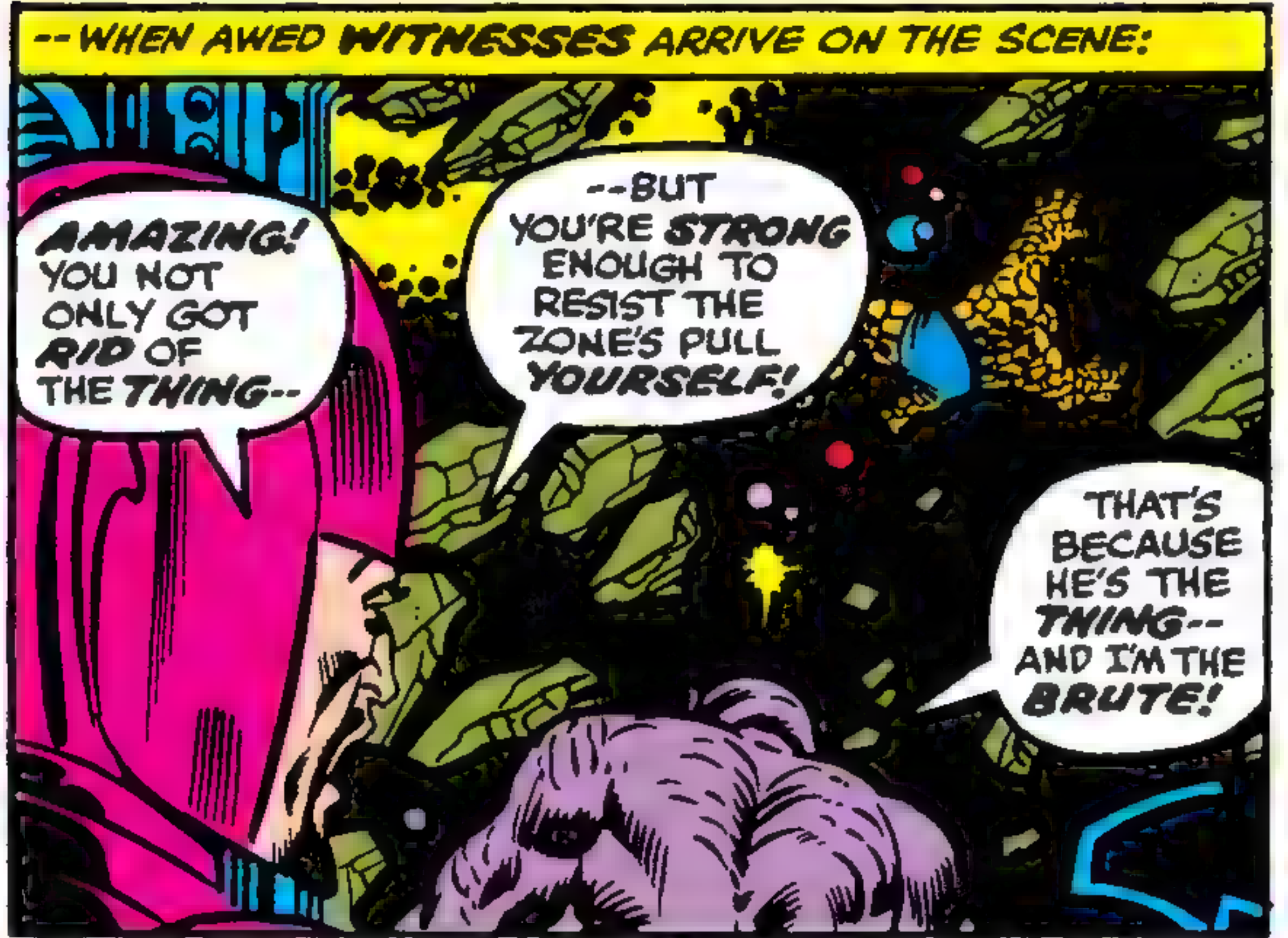
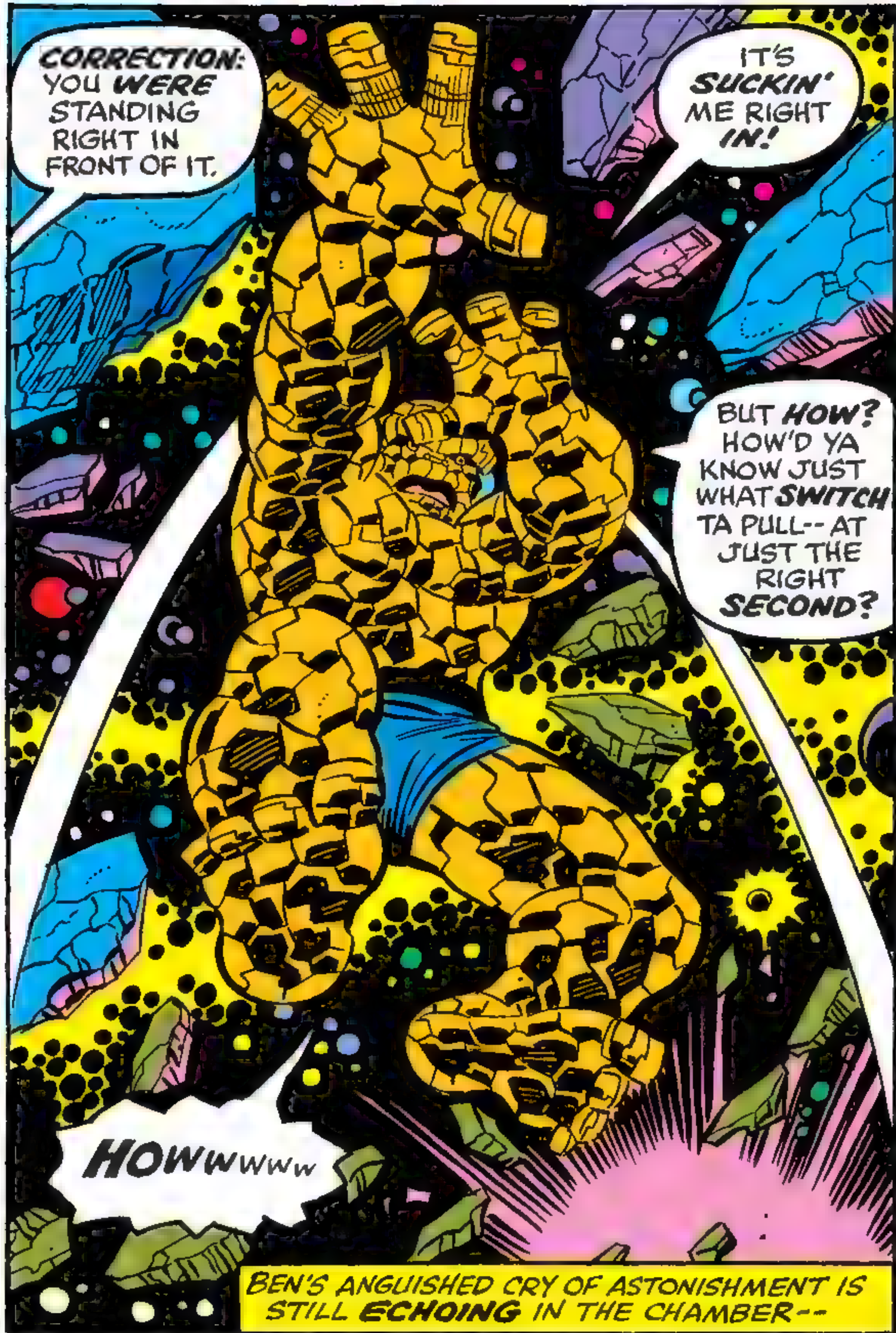
I SIMPLY WANTED YOU TO PASS-- THAT VERY SPOT!

WHAT TH--?



YOU OPENED THE DOOR TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE--

--AN' I'M STANDIN' RIGHT IN FRONT OF IT!



SORRY WE DIDN'T STOP EARLIER TO CLUE IN THOSE OF YOU WHO MISSED WARLOCK #6-7, A COUPLE OF YEARS BACK--SINCE THAT'S WHERE THE BRUTE, A.K.A. REED RICHARDS FIRST APPEARED. BUT, WE KIND'A WANTED TO SURPRISE A FEW OF YOU. AND, THERE'S ANOTHER KING-SIZE SHOCK OR TWO IN STORE NEXT ISSUE, IN THE STORY WE CALL--

MY KILLER-- MYSELF!

FANTASTIC
FOUR

MARVEL COMICS GROUP



30¢

178
JAN

02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR

YOU'RE TOUGH,
THING--BUT
YOU'RE NOTHING
COMPARED TO--

--THE
BRUTE!



AND THAT
GOES DOUBLE
FOR THE
REST OF US!

AT LAST!

THE SHOWDOWN WITH
THE
FRIGHTFUL
FOUR!

A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human!
MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

CALL MY KILLER... THE BRUTE!

THE NEGATIVE ZONE:
IT LIES WAITING BUT A HEARTBEAT
AWAY FROM OUR OWN WORKADAY
WORLD; YET, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A
LIGHT-YEAR REMOVED, AS FAR AS
THE EVER LOVIN' BLUE-EYED THING
IS CONCERNED.

HIS ONLY COMMENT AS
A NEWLY-ARRIVED RESI-
DENT OF SAID ZONE IS
DISTINCTLY PROSAIC:

LEMME
OUTTA
HERE!!

ROY THOMAS WRITER/EDITOR	GEORGE PEREZ ILLUSTRATOR
DAVE HUNT	GUEST INKER & COLORIST
JOE ROSEN	LETTERER

BUT, IF BEN GRIMM IS PERHAPS THE NEWEST ARRIVAL IN THE FABLED NEGATIVE ZONE...

...HE BY NO MEANS HAS IT ALL TO HIMSELF!

WHO THE HECK ARE THEM BOZOS?

LOOKS LIKE A GATHERIN' OF THE COUNT DRACULA SOCIETY NEGATIVE ZONE DIVISION!

ME--I CAN'T EVEN STOP TURNIN' END-OVER-END!

UH OH! LOOKS LIKE I SPOKE UP TOO SOON AGAIN.

EVERYBODY HERE BUT THE HEAD HONCHO--OL' ANNIHILUS HIMSELF.

GOOD THING THEY'RE NOT DOIN' ANYTHING--JUST GIVIN' ME THE FISH-EYE. THEY--

SOMETHIN' HEADIN' THIS WAY LIKE A SHOT--AN' IT SURE AIN'T NO LIGHTNIN' BUG!

ONLY THING IS, I DUNNO WHO IT IS-- OR WHAT!

BODY LIKE A MAN-- BUT THAT HEAD--

--IT'S SNAKE CITY!

--AN' HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMING RIGHT AT ME!

BRACE YERSELF, BENJY! THIS IS THE--

HEY!

HE LOOKS STRONG--AN' HE LOOKS MEAN--

IF ONLY I COULD GET A FOOTHOLD SOMEWHERE--SO'S I COULD FIGHT BACK!

BUT, IF WISHES WERE FISHES, WE'D ALL RIDE, OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT...

**WHO TURNED
OUT THE
FREAKIN'
LIGHTS?**

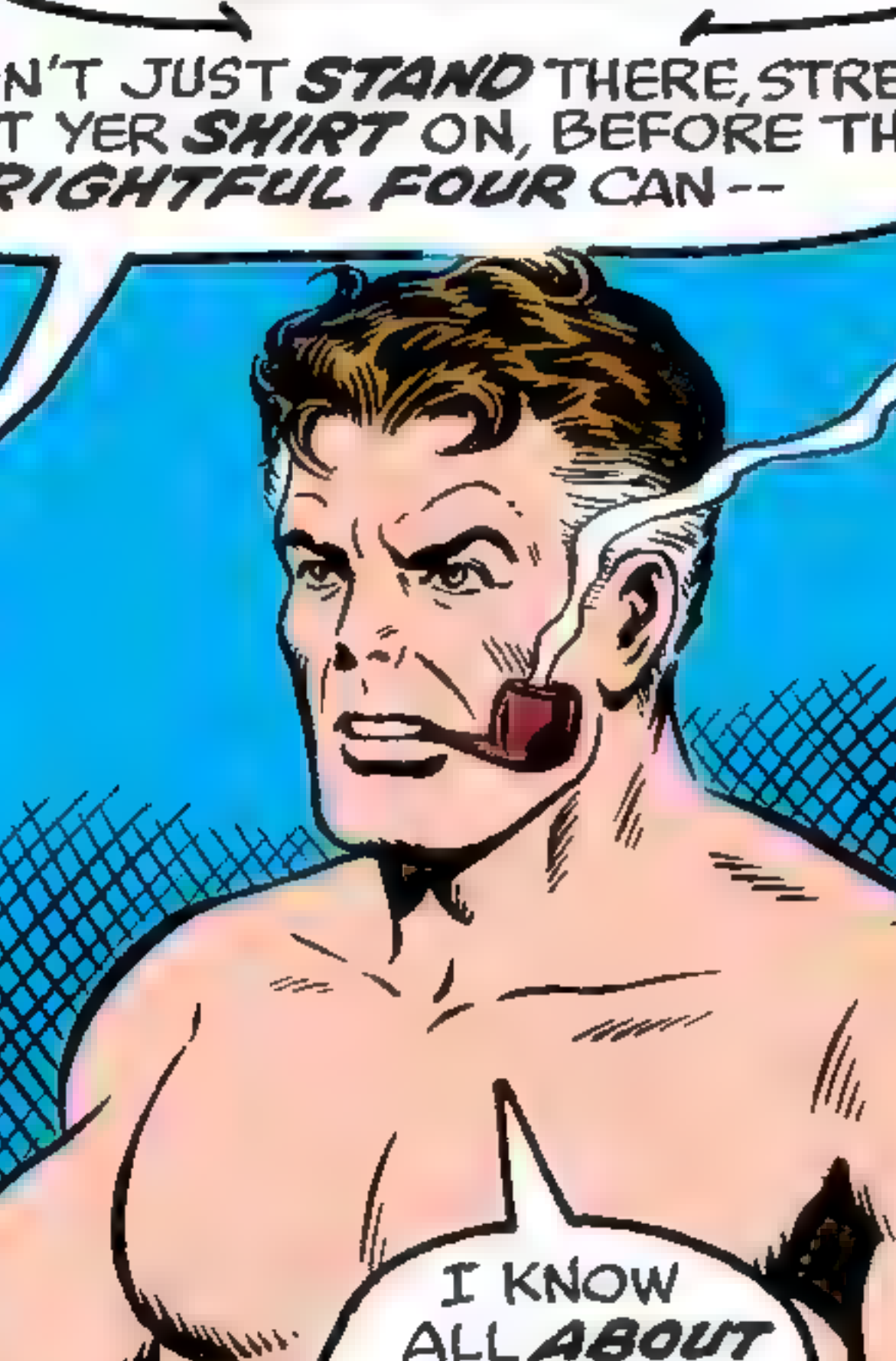
I AIN'T IN THE
NEGATIVE
ZONE NO
MORE!

BUT--
YOU--

**BUT--
YOU--**

**REED! YER FREE-- EVEN
CHAWIN' AWAY ON YER FAVORITE
MEERSCHAUM!**

**DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE, STRETCH!
GET YER *SHIRT* ON, BEFORE THE
FRIGHTFUL FOUR CAN --**



**I KNOW
ALL *ABOUT*
THE FRIGHT-
FUL FOUR,
GRIMM...**

DON'T JUST **STAND** THERE, STRETCH!
GET YER **SHIRT** ON, BEFORE THE
FRIGHTFUL FOUR CAN--

I KNOW
ALL **ABOUT**
THE FRIGHT-
FUL FOUR,
GRIMM...

"MEMBER?"
WHAT IN BLAZES
ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

**HOLY
COW!**

ALLUVA
SUDDEN,
THERE'S
TWO
OF YA!

HOLY COW!

ALLUVA
SUDDEN,
THERE'S
TWO
OF YA!

DON'T
FORGET *US*,
BROTHER!
WE'RE HANGING
AROUND *TOO*,
ONE WAY AND
ANOTHER.

...**ESPECIALLY**
SINCE I HAVE
JUST BECOME
THEIR **FOURTH**
AND FINAL
MEMBER!

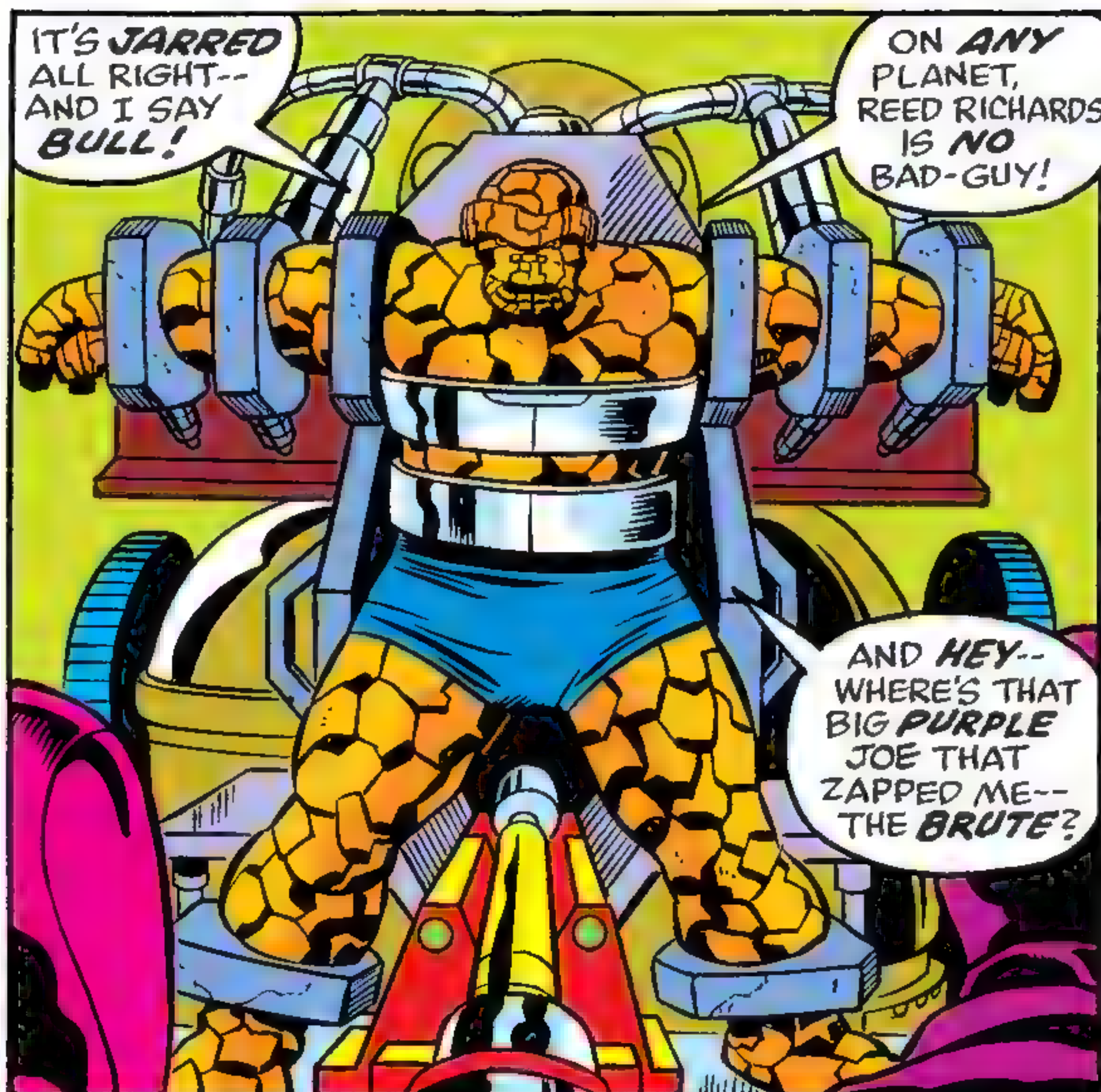
DON'T YOU
SEE, BEN? THE
OTHER ONE IS
THE REED RICHARDS
OF **COUNTER-
EARTH**, ON THE
FAR SIDE OF
THE **SUN!** * 1

WE **FOUGHT** THEM ALL, A FEW MINUTES AGO, WHEN **THAT** ONE **JOINED** THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR.

PERHAPS
THE SIGHT OF
YOUR THREE
FELLOW MEMBERS--
PLUS THESE TWO
INTERFERING HELLIONS,
THUNDER AND **TIGRA**--
WILL **JAR** YOUR
MEMORY.

I SUSPECT
IT JUST *DID*,
WIZARD.

*FROM WHICH THE F.F. JUST
RETURNED, AN ISSUE OR
SO BACK.-- ROY.



IT'S **JARRED** ALL RIGHT-- AND I SAY **BULL!**

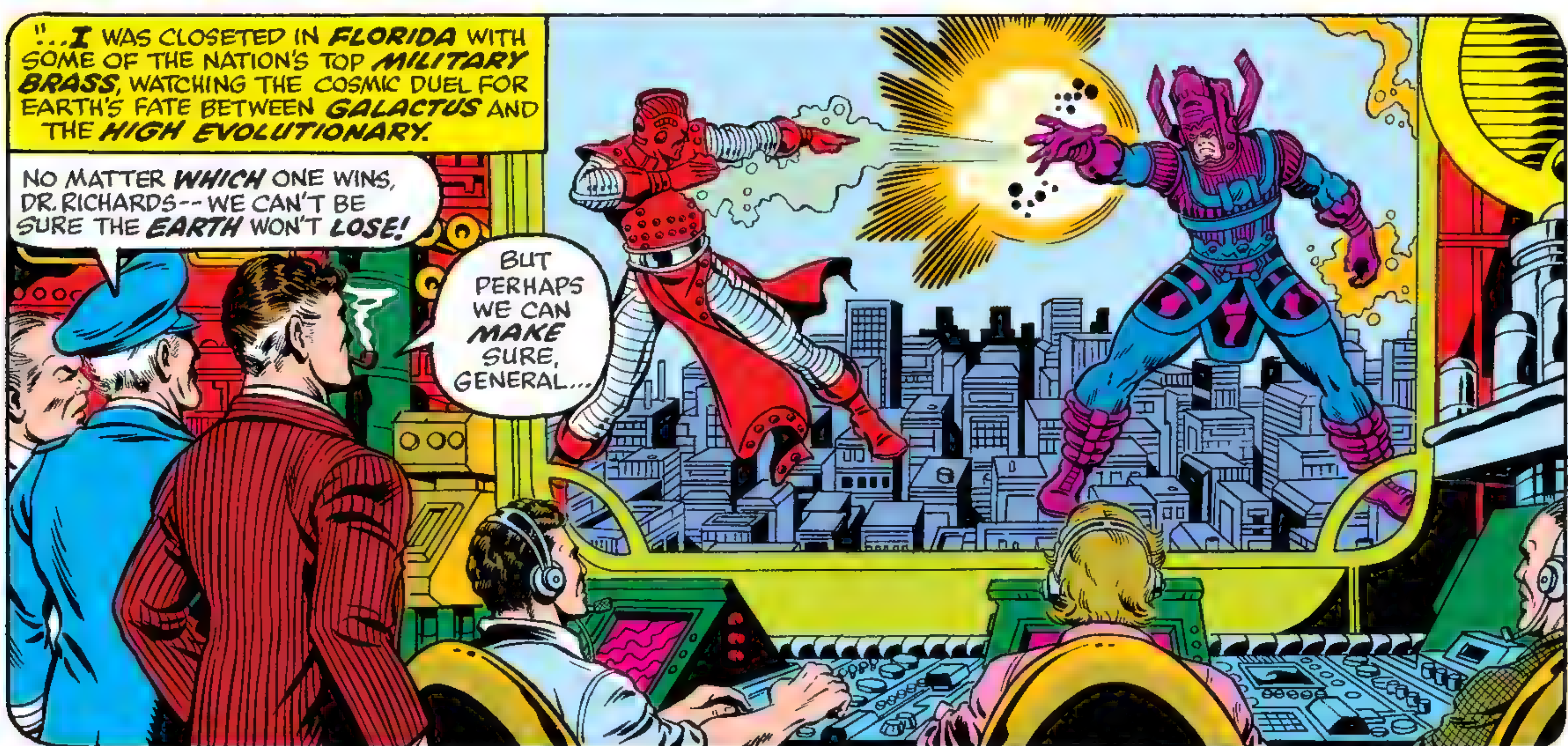
ON **ANY** PLANET, REED RICHARDS IS **NO** BAD-GUY!

AND HEY-- WHERE'S THAT BIG **PURPLE** JOE THAT ZAPPED ME-- THE **BRUTE?**



I WILL, SANDMAN.

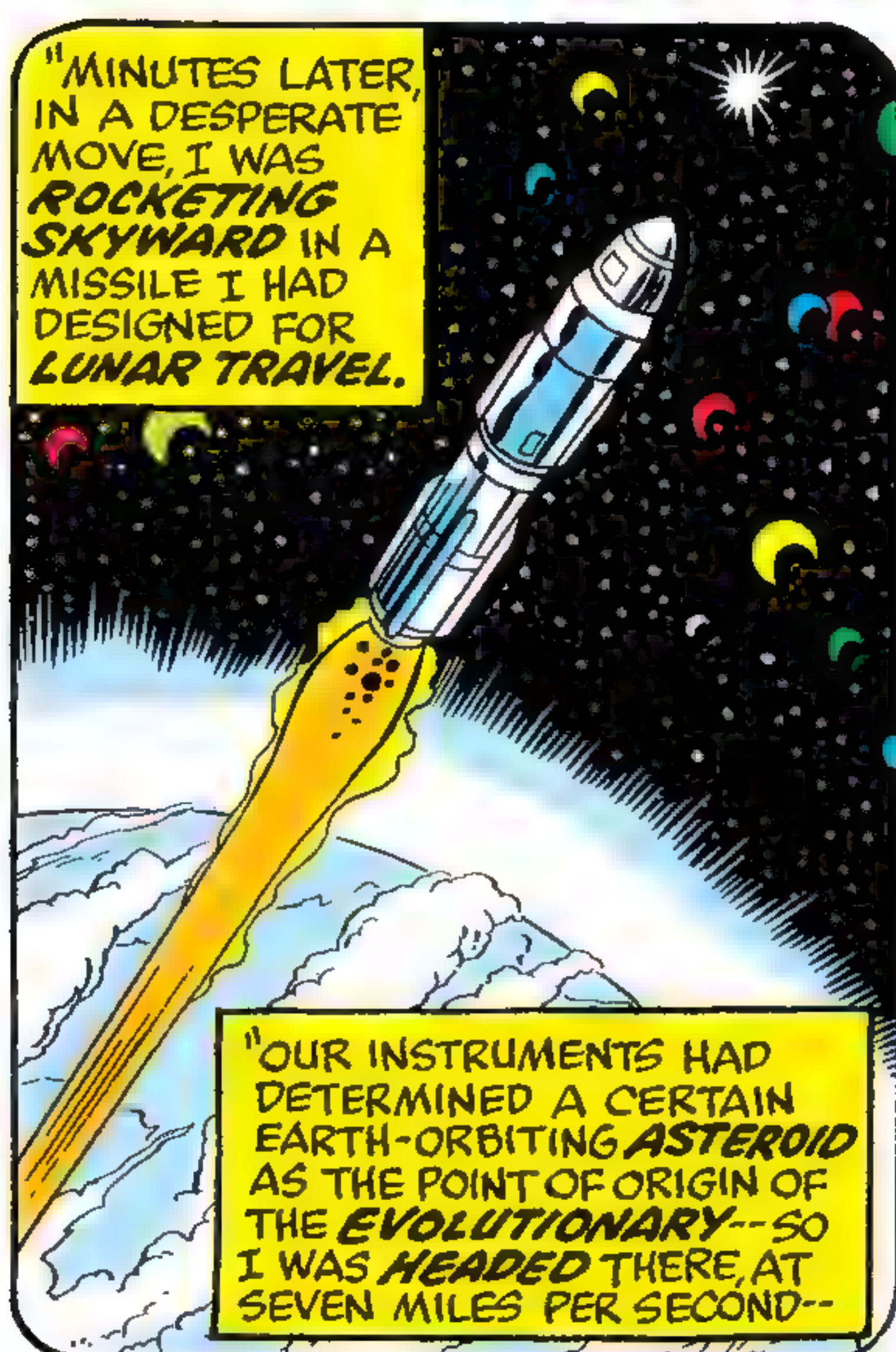
YOU SEE, GRIMM, NOT MANY HOURS **BACK**, WHILE YOU WERE ON **MY** WORLD, 200 MILLION MILES AWAY...



"...I WAS CLOSETED IN **FLORIDA** WITH SOME OF THE NATION'S TOP **MILITARY BRASS**, WATCHING THE COSMIC DUEL FOR EARTH'S FATE BETWEEN **GALACTUS** AND THE **HIGH EVOLUTIONARY**.

NO MATTER **WHICH** ONE WINS, DR. RICHARDS-- WE CAN'T BE SURE THE **EARTH** WON'T **LOSE!**

BUT PERHAPS WE CAN **MAKE** SURE, GENERAL...



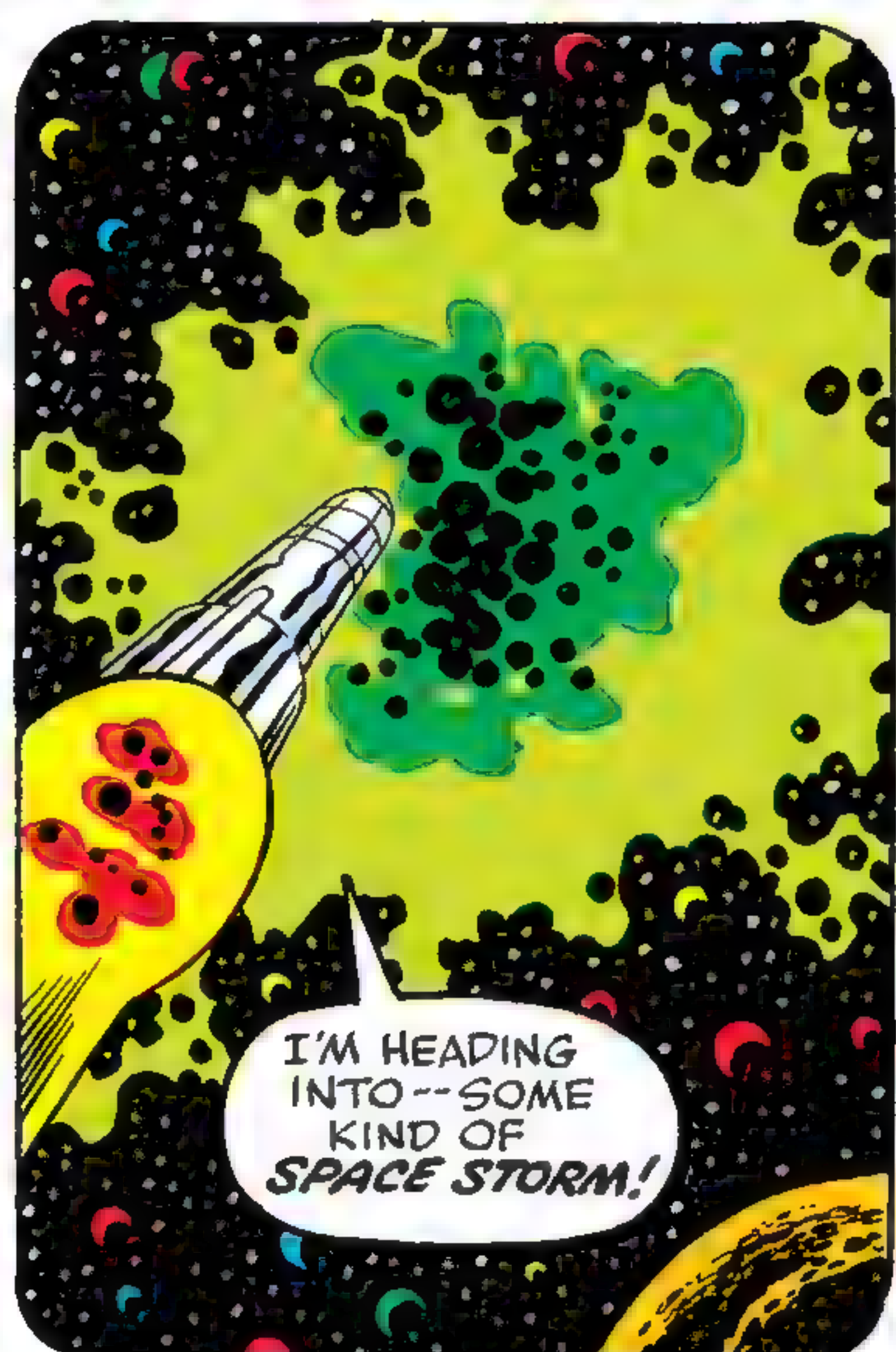
"MINUTES LATER, IN A DESPERATE MOVE, I WAS **ROCKETING SKYWARD** IN A MISSILE I HAD DESIGNED FOR **LUNAR TRAVEL**.

"OUR INSTRUMENTS HAD DETERMINED A CERTAIN EARTH-ORBITING **ASTEROID** AS THE POINT OF ORIGIN OF THE **EVOLUTIONARY**-- SO I WAS **HEADED** THERE, AT SEVEN MILES PER SECOND--

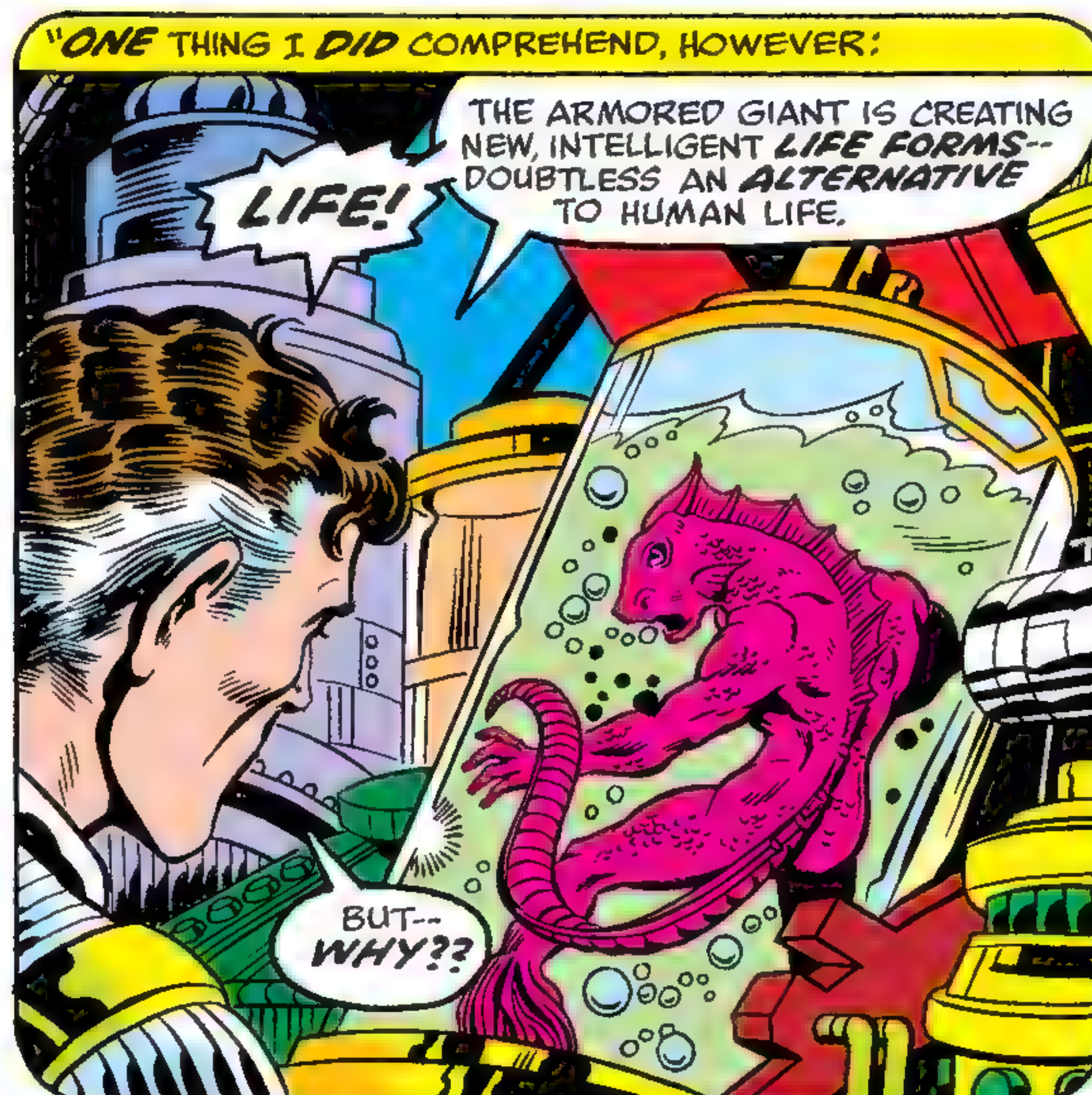
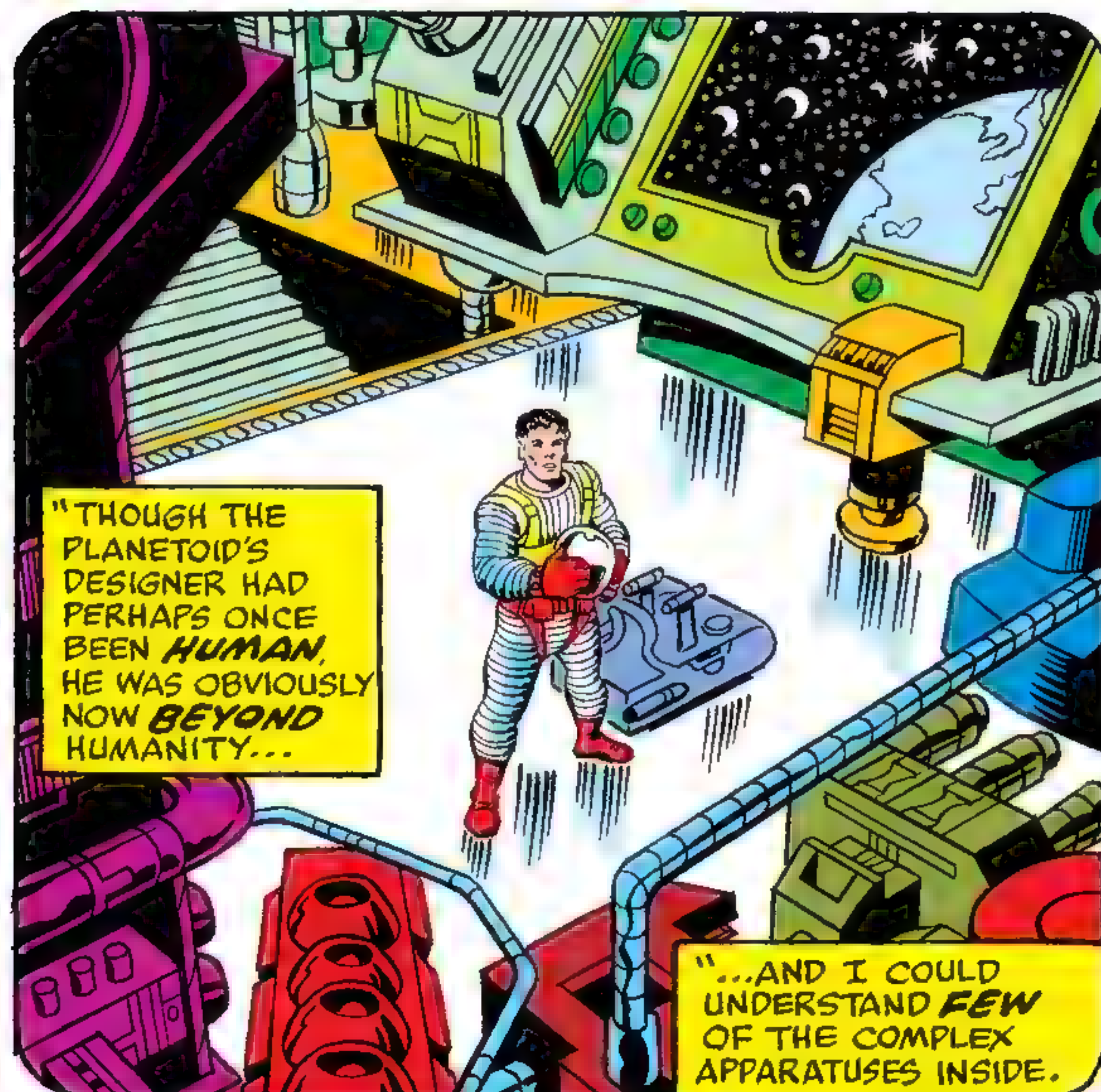
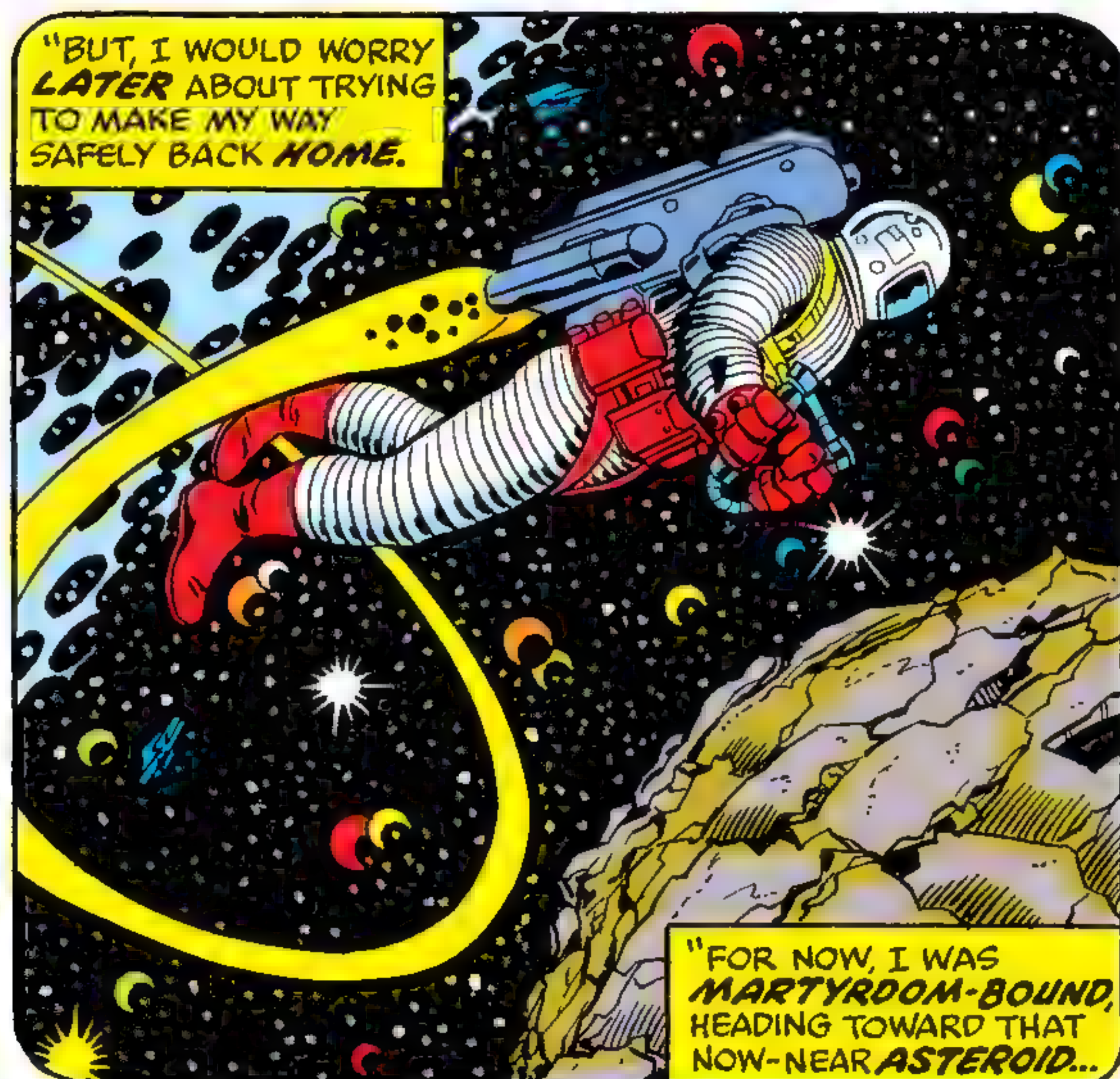
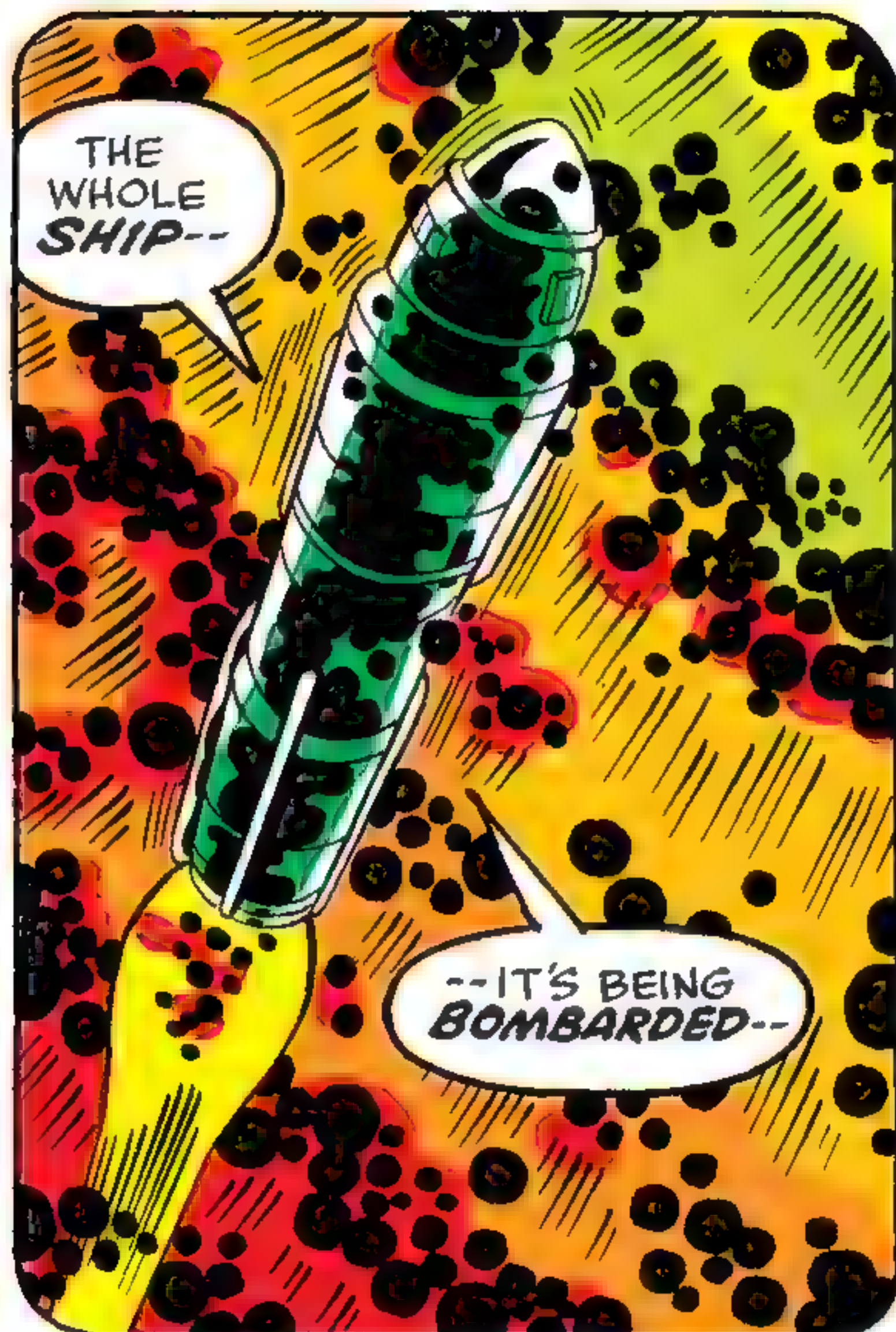


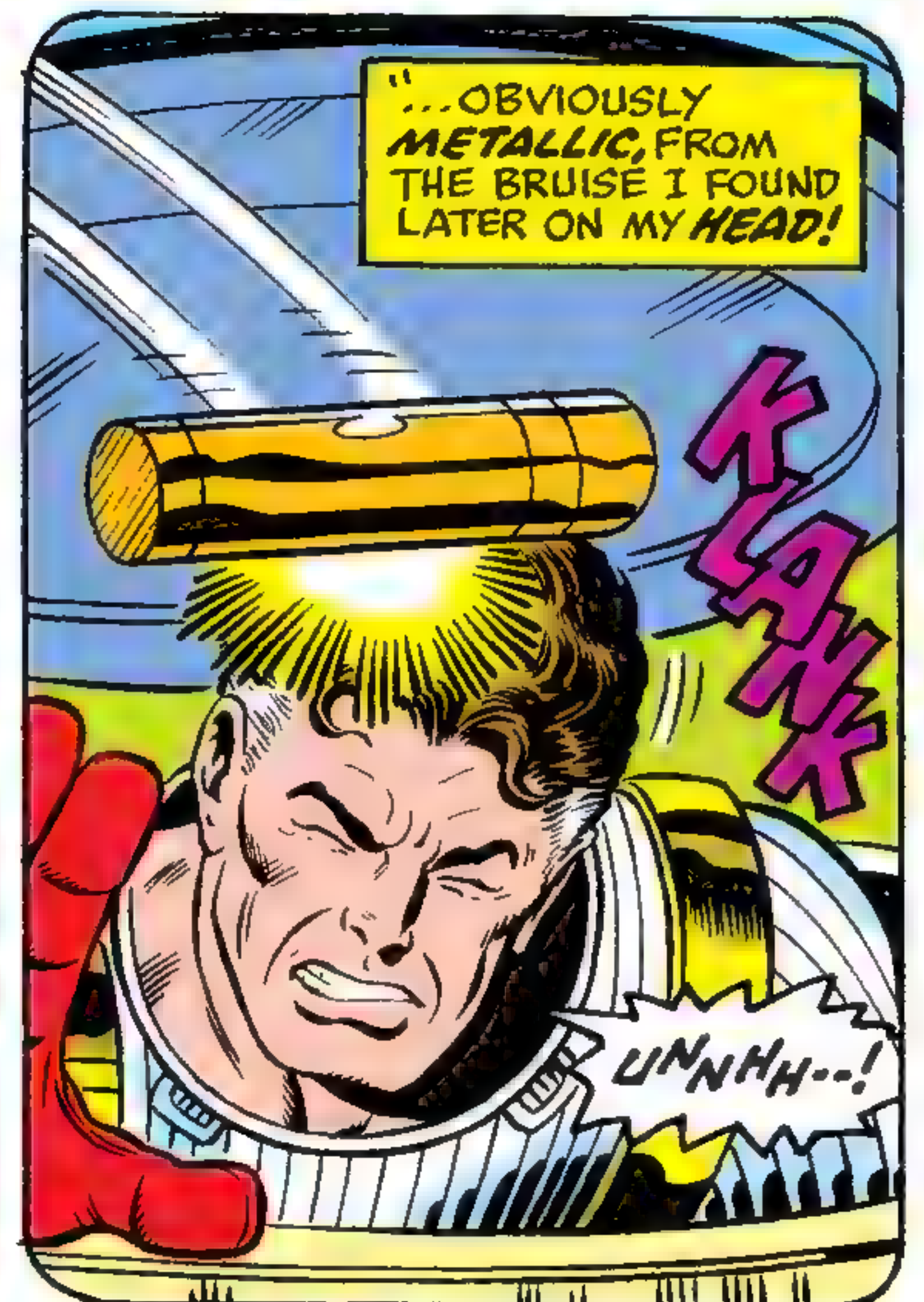
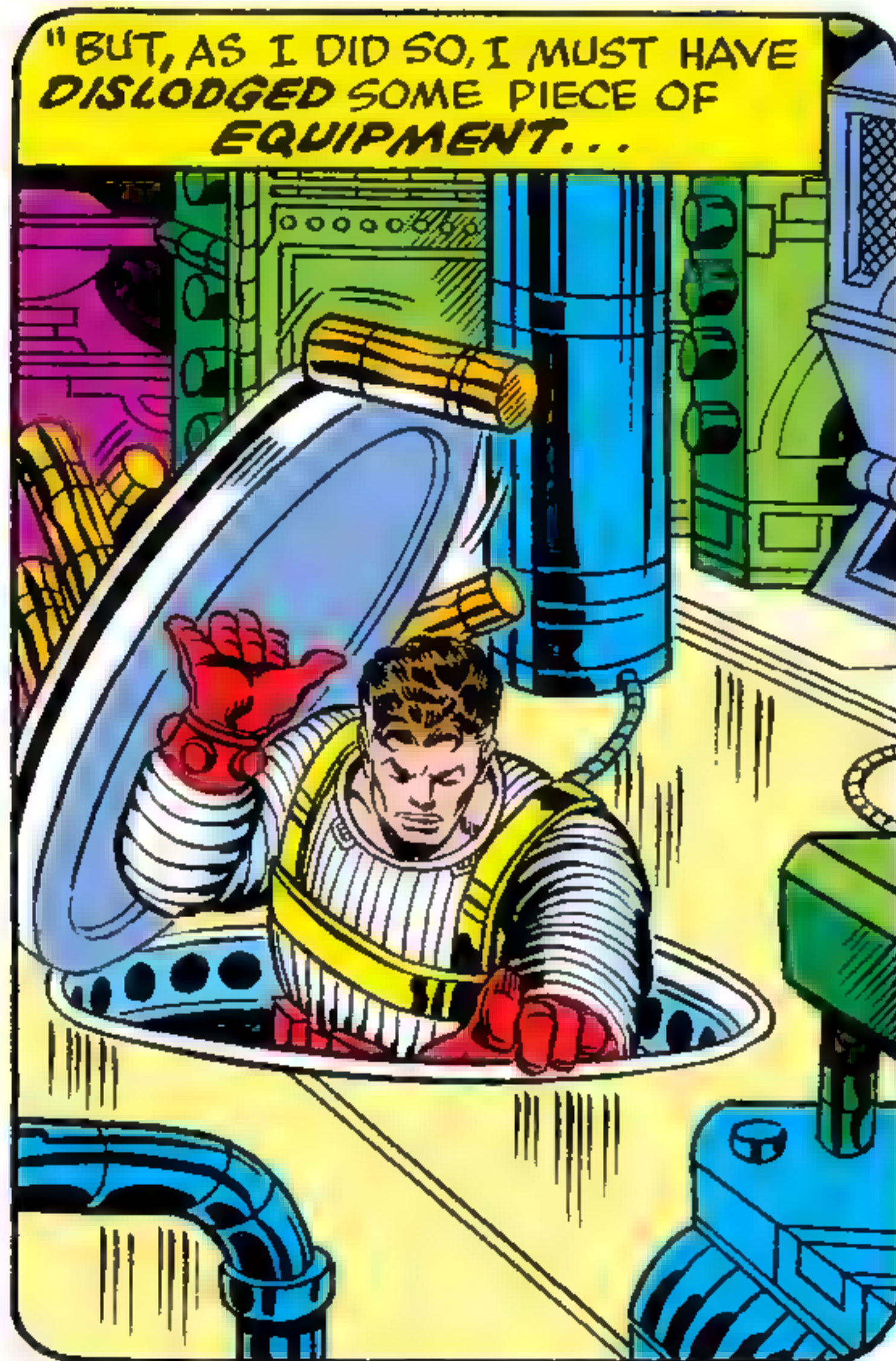
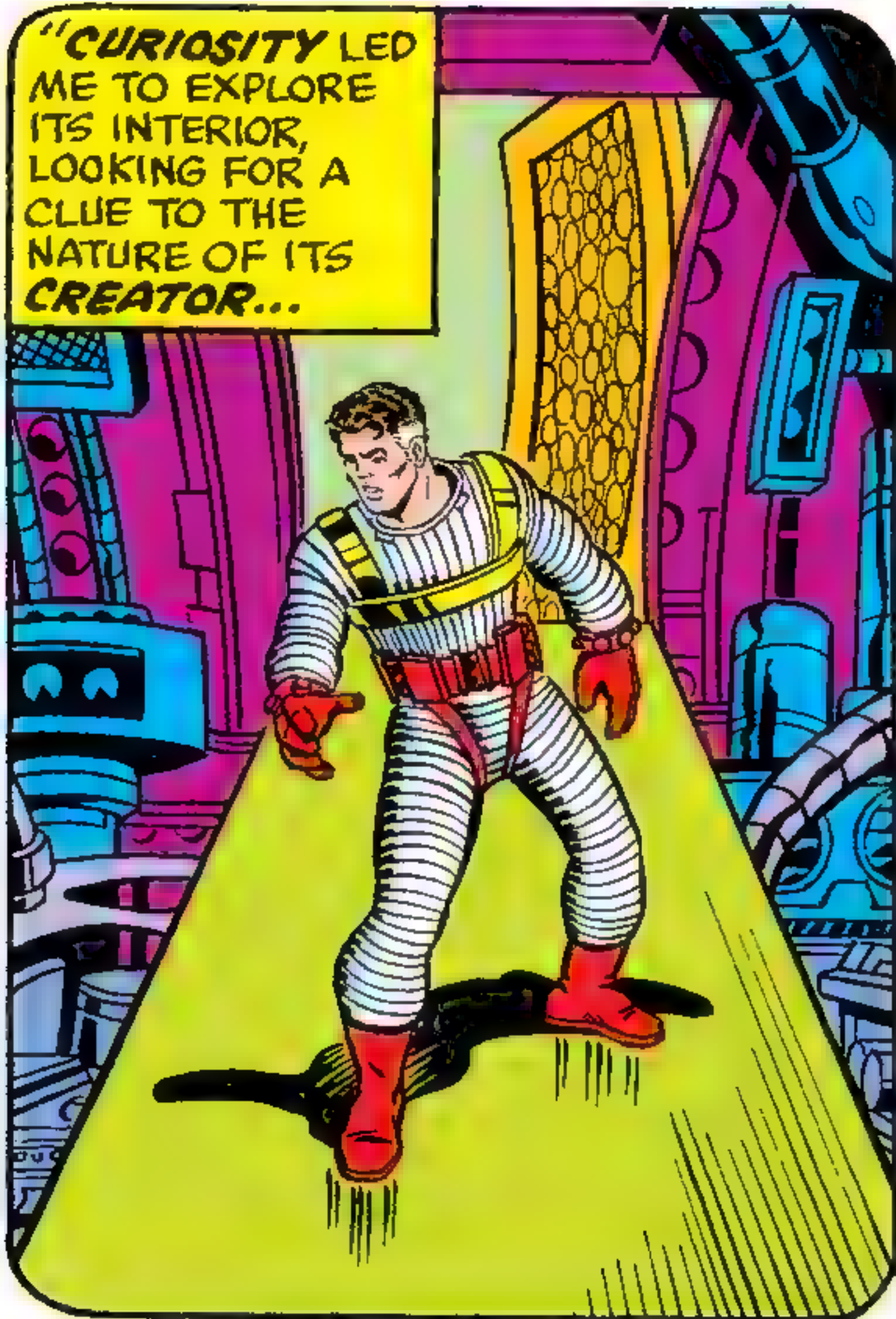
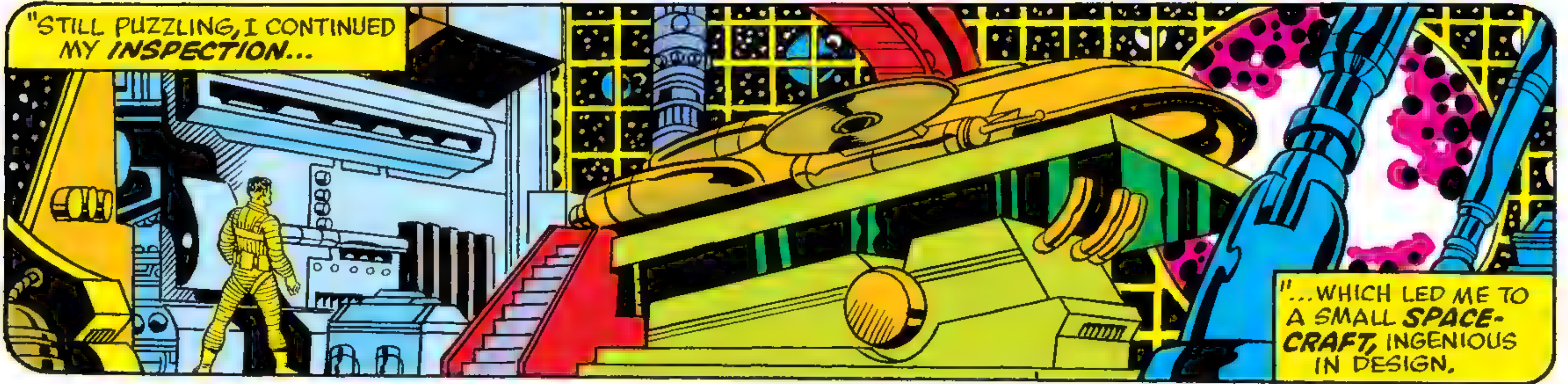
"-- WHEN **SUDDENLY--**

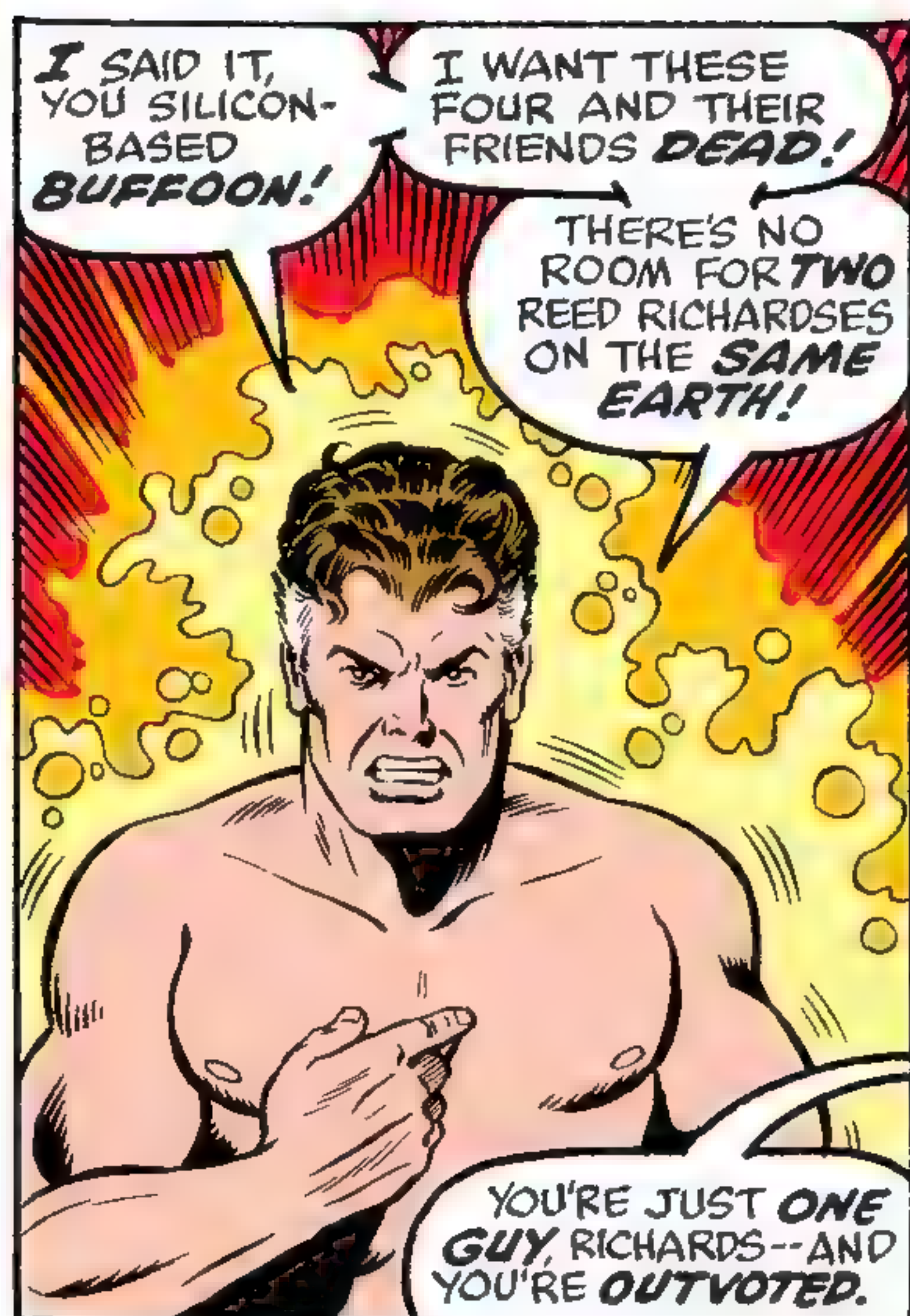
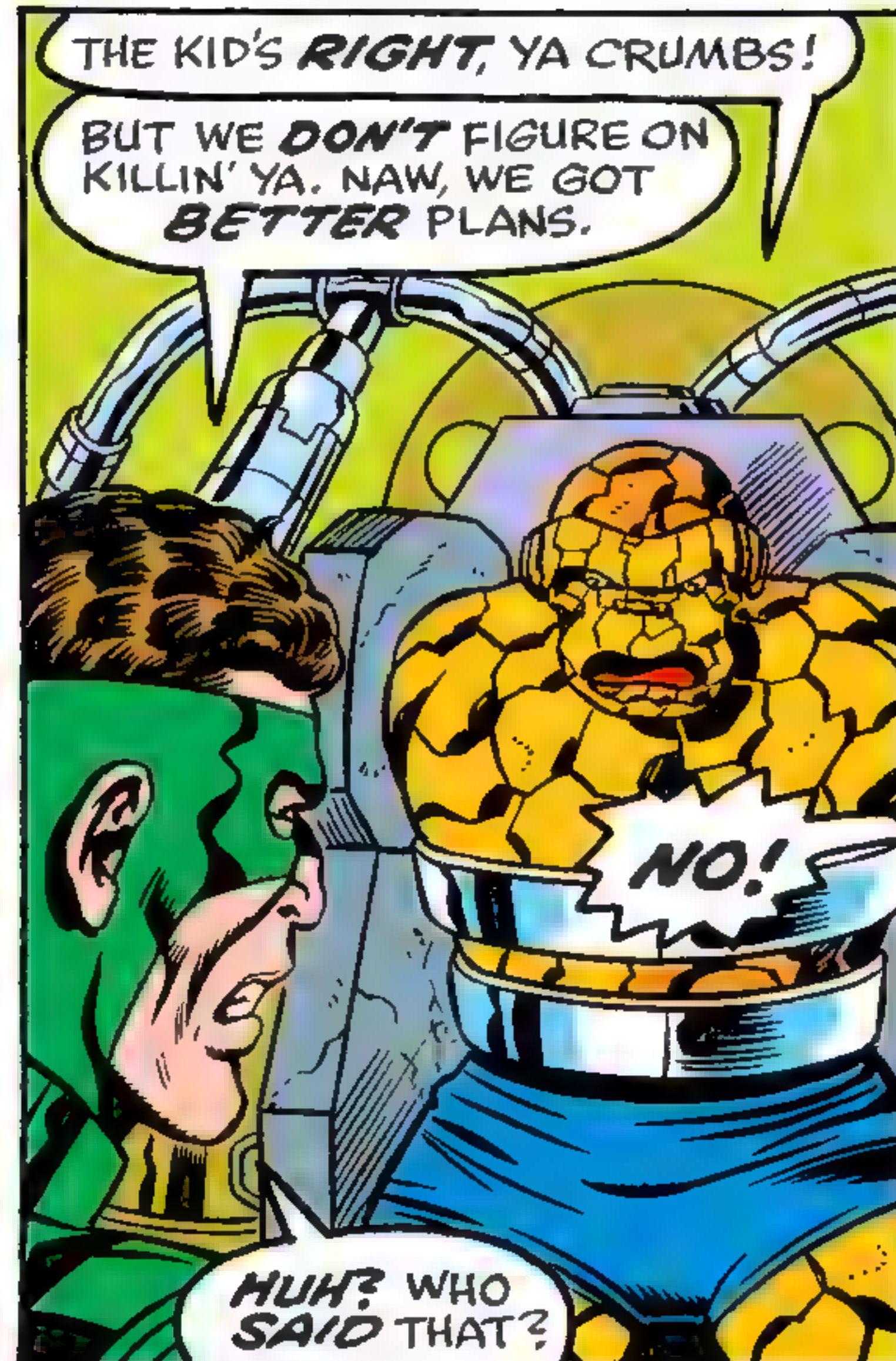
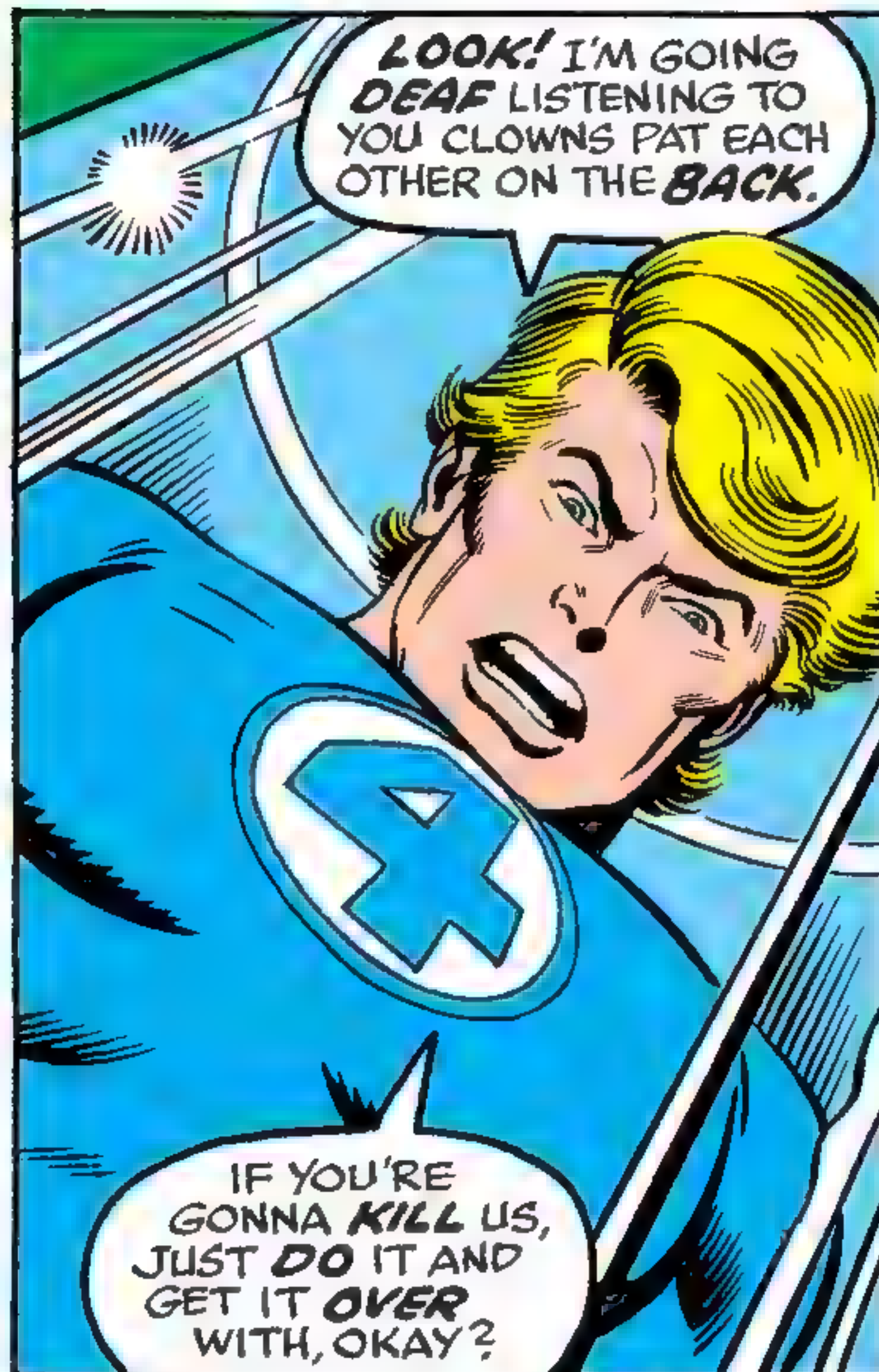
NO! NO!!

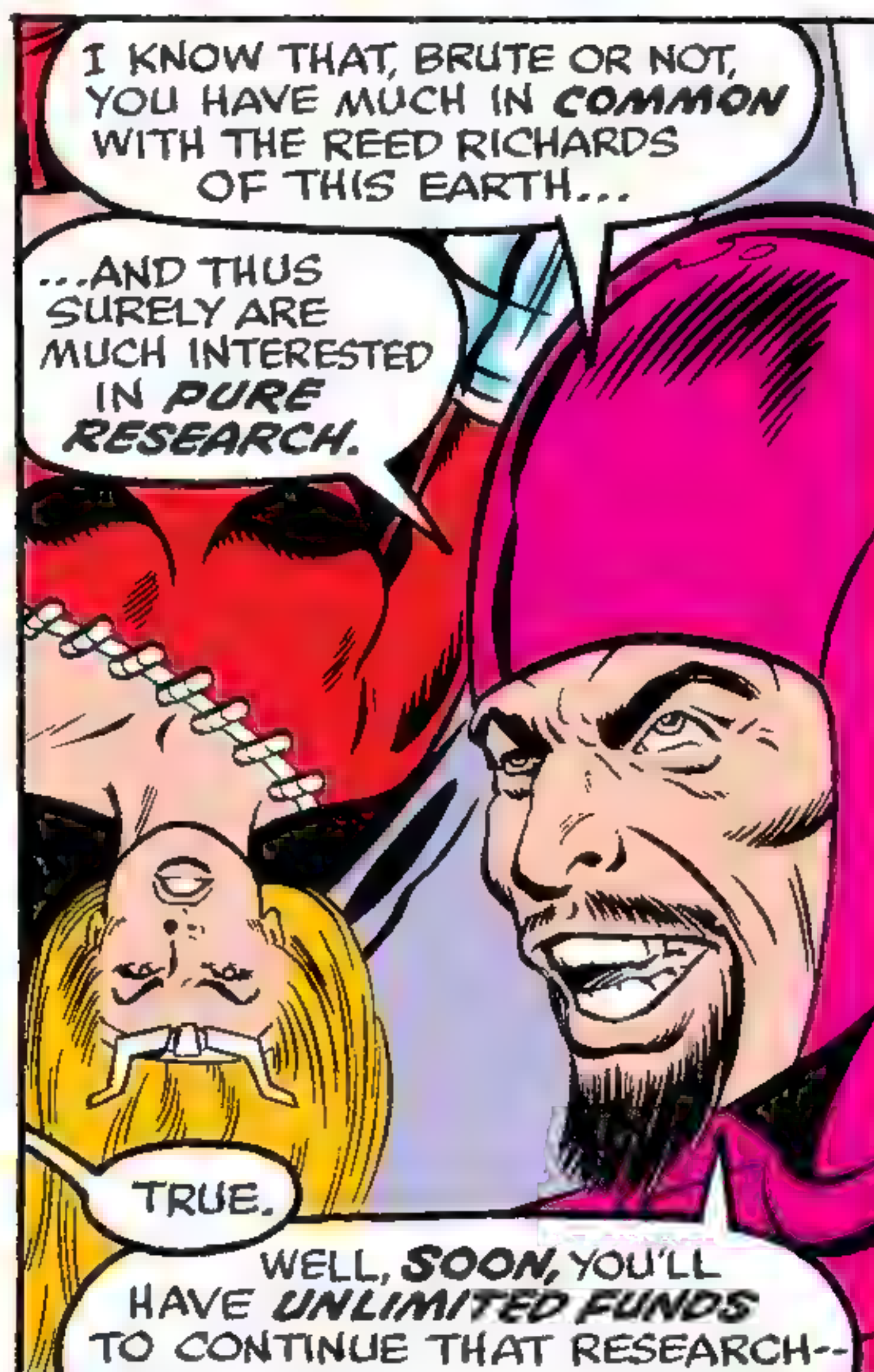
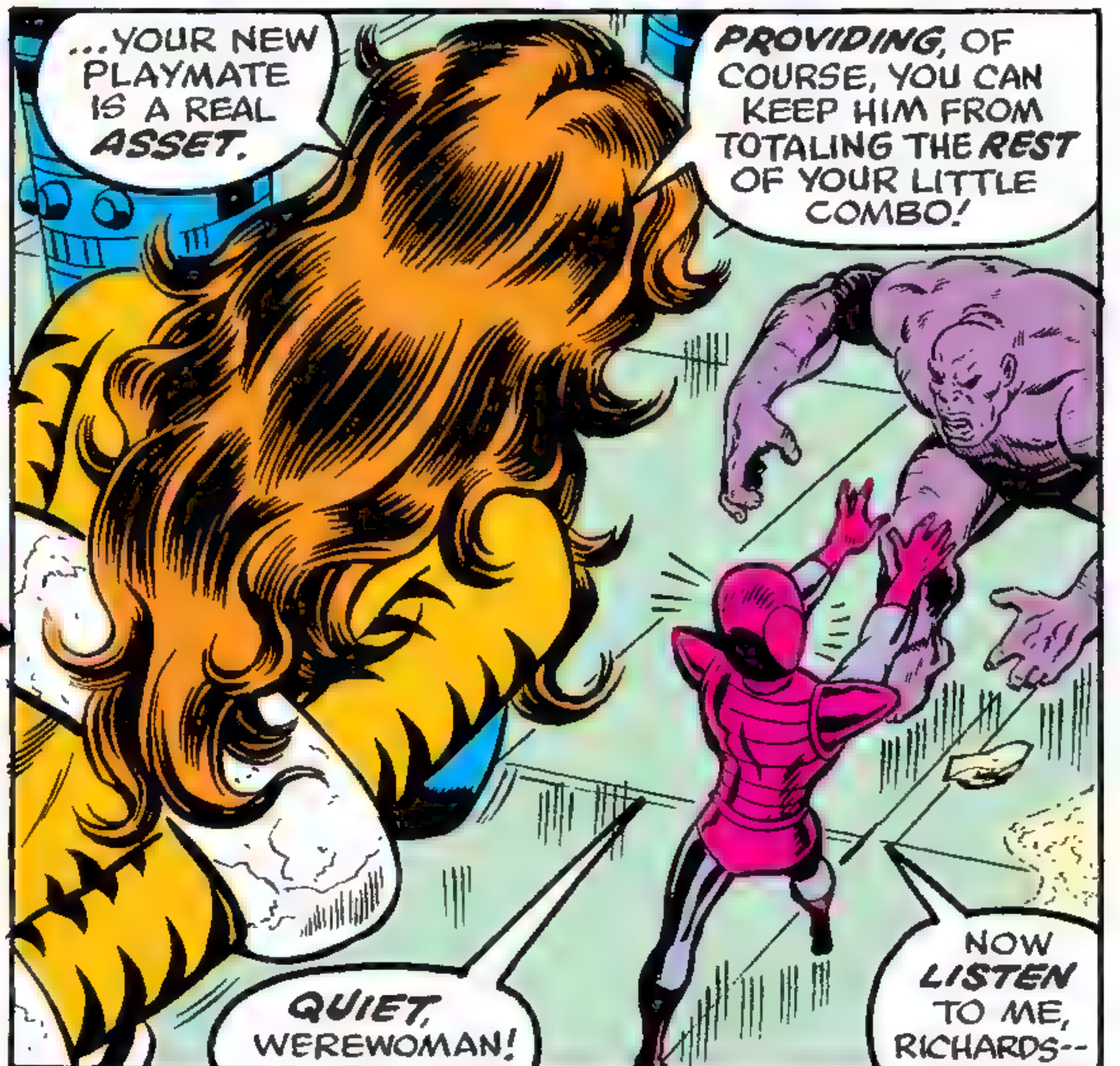
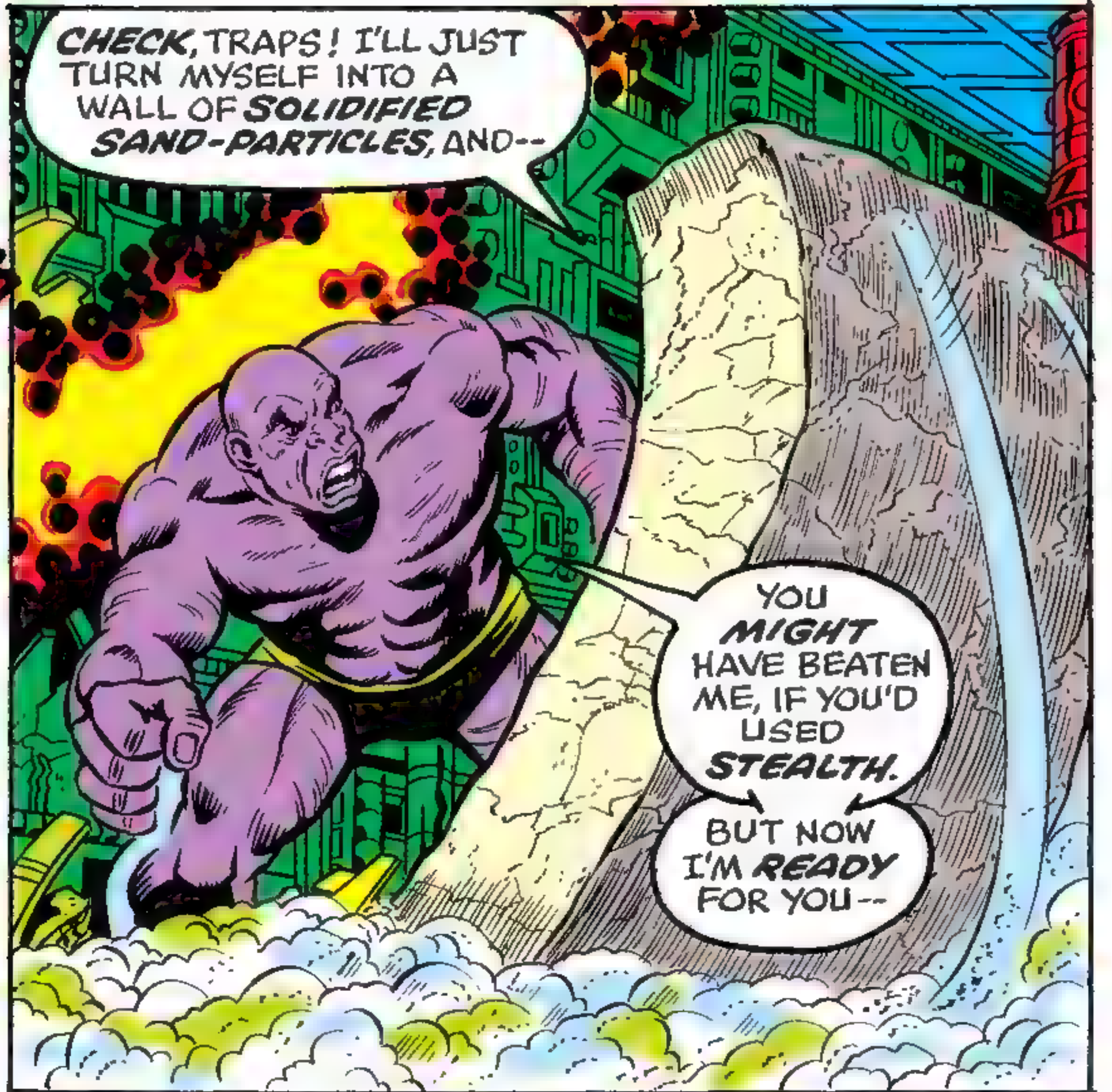


I'M HEADING INTO-- SOME KIND OF **SPACE STORM!**









AND, AT ALMOST THAT VERY **MOMENT** (THANKS TO AN EARLIER PHONED TIP TO ONE **J. JONAH JAMESON**)...

READ ALL ABOUT IT!!

THE **F.F.** HELD CAPTIVE IN THE **BAXTER BUILDING!**

DAILY BUGLE
FANTASTIC FOUR HELD FOR ONE BILLION DOLLAR RANSOM BY NEW FRIGHTFUL FOUR

WHILE, IN NEW YORK'S COLORFUL **TIMES SQUARE...**

RANSOM FOR F.F.

LOOK! IS-- IS IT POSSIBLE?

IT **IS** POSSIBLE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... AND IT HAS **HAPPENED!**

THE **CITY**, WHICH CONSIDERS THE **F.F.** ONE OF ITS **GREATEST NATURAL RESOURCES**, HAS BEEN GIVEN UNTIL **3 A.M.** TO PAY THE **BILLION-DOLLAR RANSOM...**

...OR FACE THE TRAGIC **CONSEQUENCES!**

abc

PERSONALLY, I HOPE THEY DON'T PAY.

AT ONE MINUTE **PAST THREE**, I'LL **STRANGLE** MY **DOPPELGÄNGER** WITH MY **BARE HANDS!**

UNLESS THEY PAY THE RANSOM AT ONE MINUTE BEFORE THEN.

CHEER UP, BRUTE! THE CITY HASN'T EVEN BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THUNDRA OR TIGRA...

...SO YOU CAN TOTAL **THEM!**

YA DIRTY--!

I DON'T GET IT! THE **IMPOSSIBLE MAN'S** GOTTA BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE. HE WUZ WITH US WHEN WE CAME IN.

OUR ONE **CHANCE** NOW IS A **BOZO** LIKE HIM WHO CAN **CHANGE** INTO ANYTHING HE WANTS TO-- BUT WHERE **IS** HE?

DON'T COUNT OVERMUCH ON HELP FROM OUR **AMIALE ALIEN, MR. G...**

FOR, IN ANOTHER ROOM, HE IS EN-GROSSSED IN THE **REAL GREAT AMERICAN PAST-TIME: WATCHING TV.**

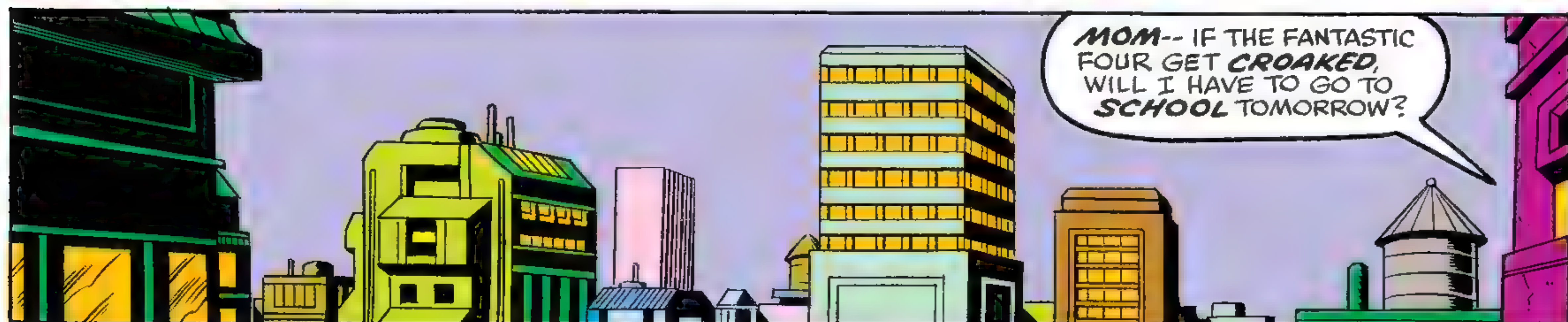
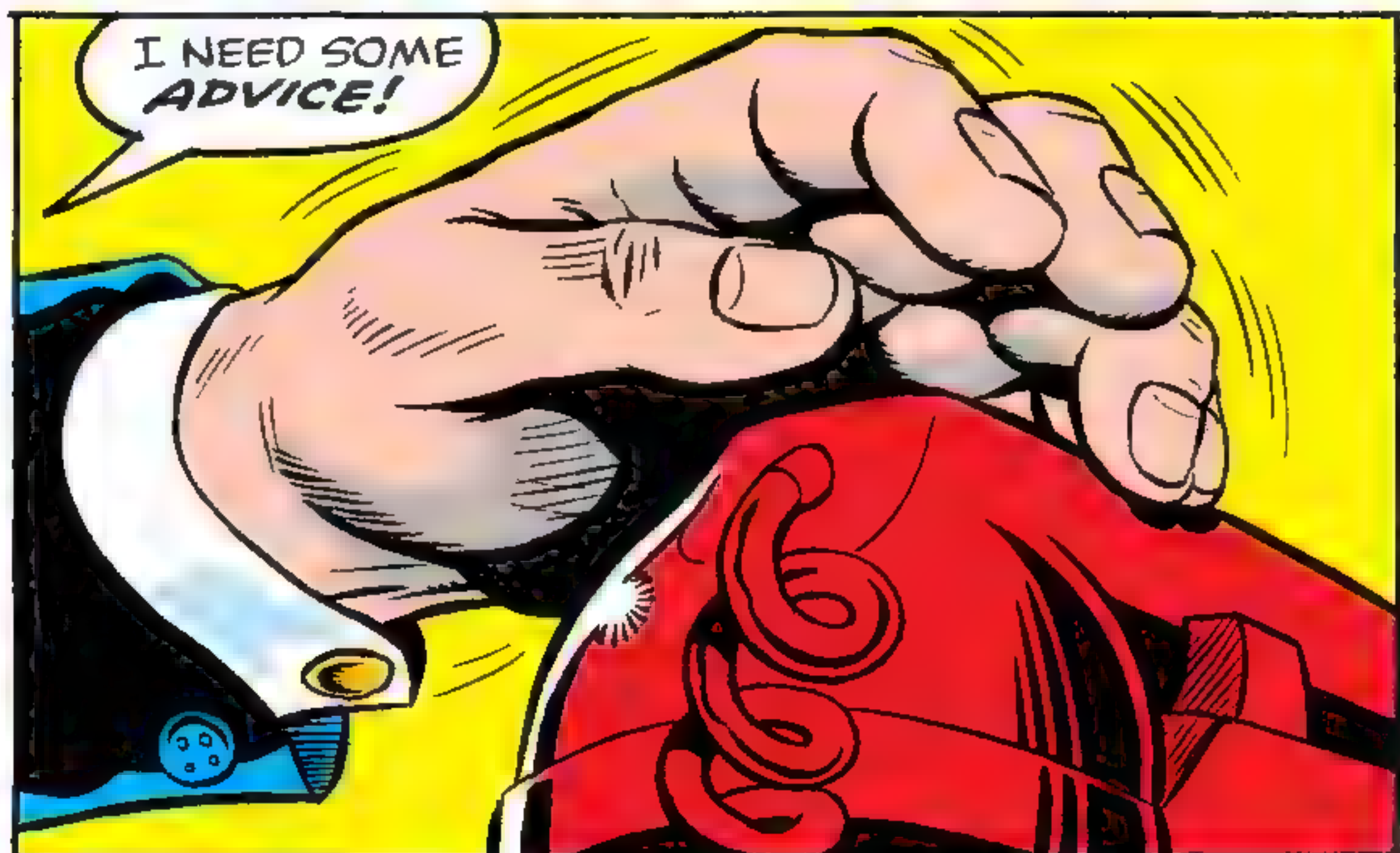
HI, FONZIE!

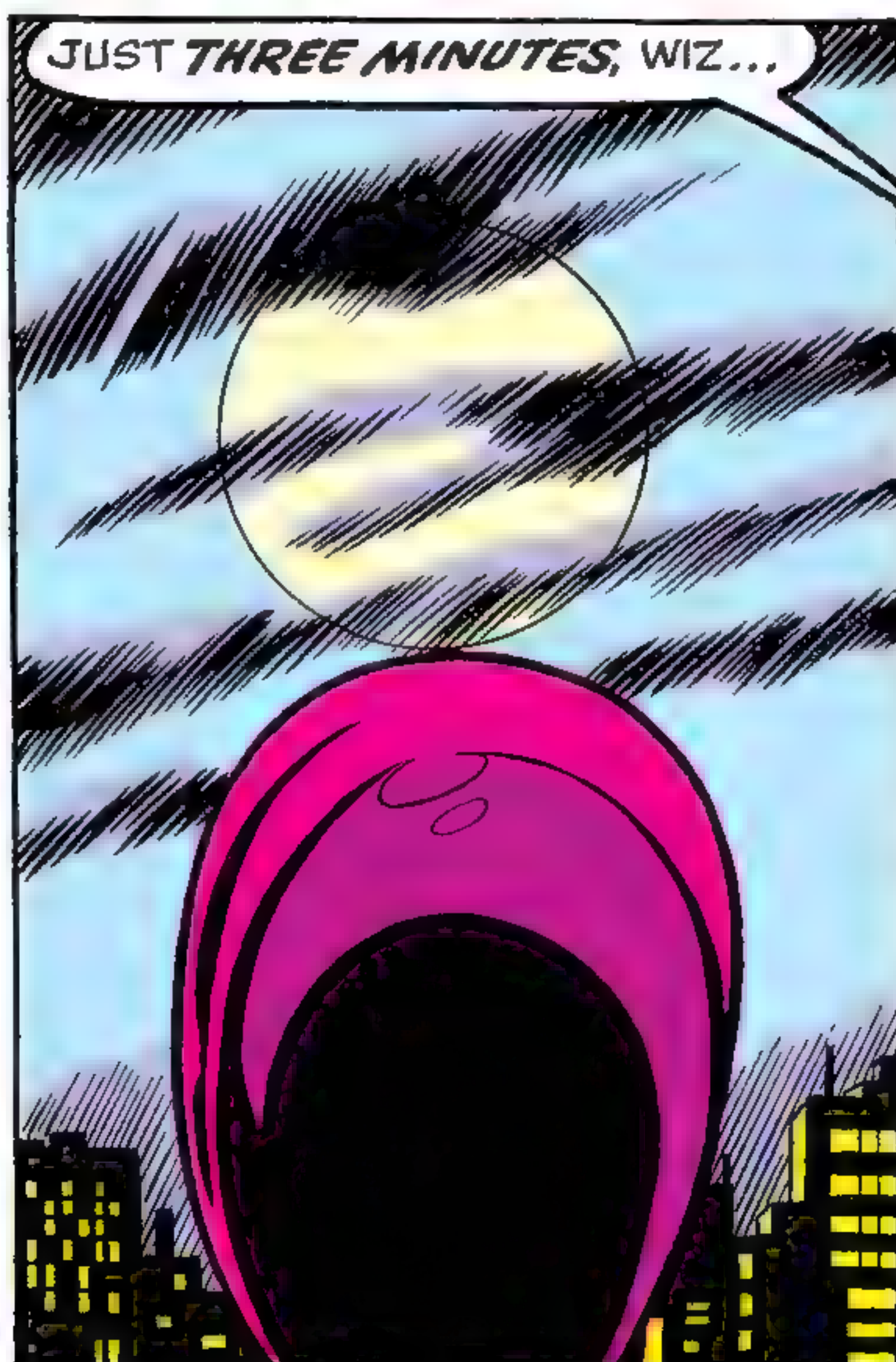
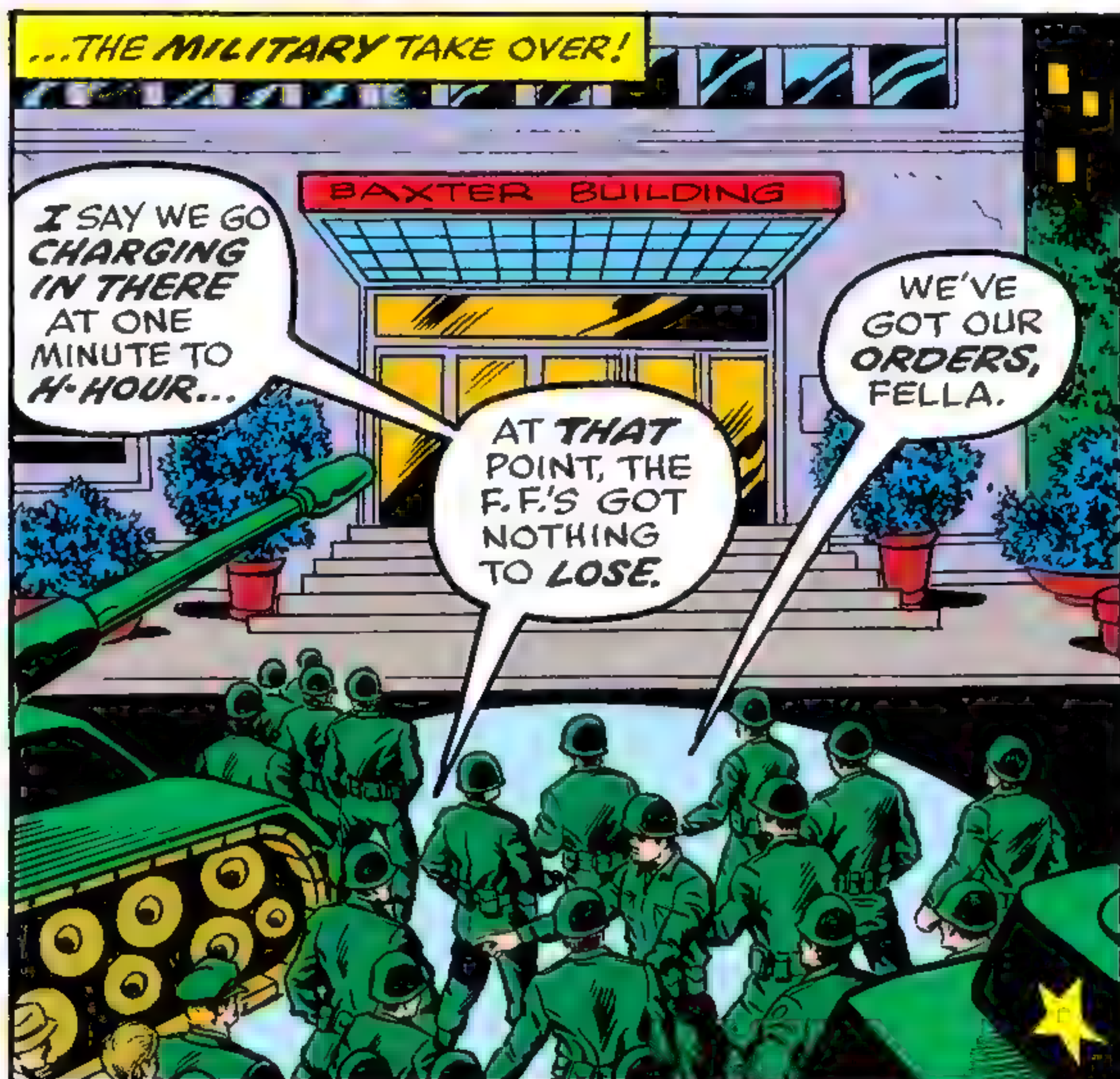
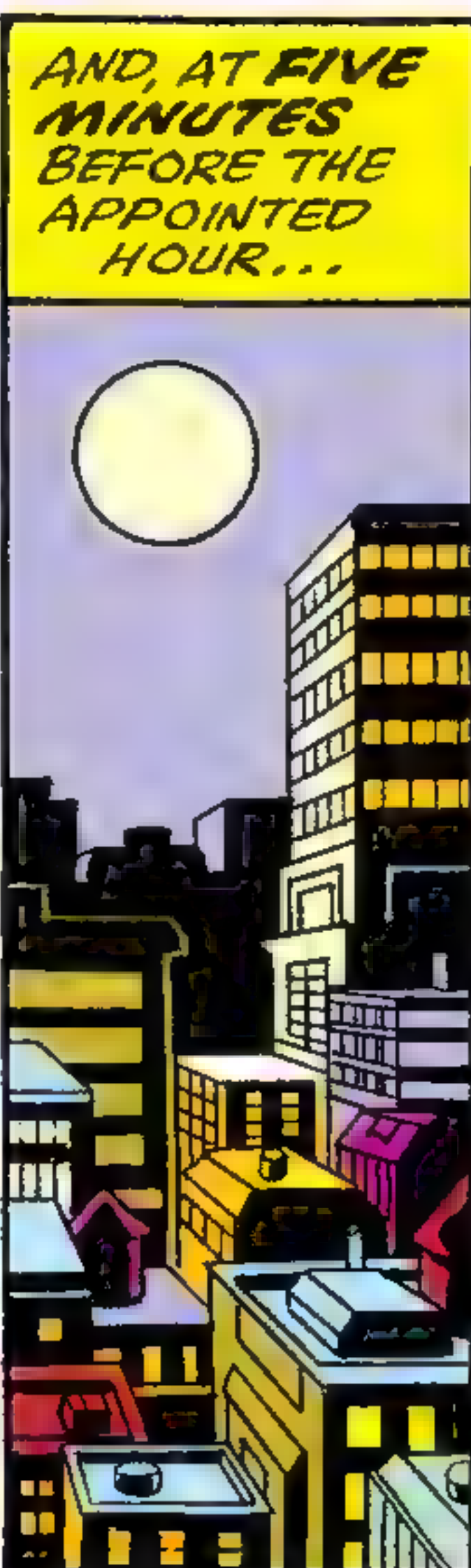
HEYyyyY

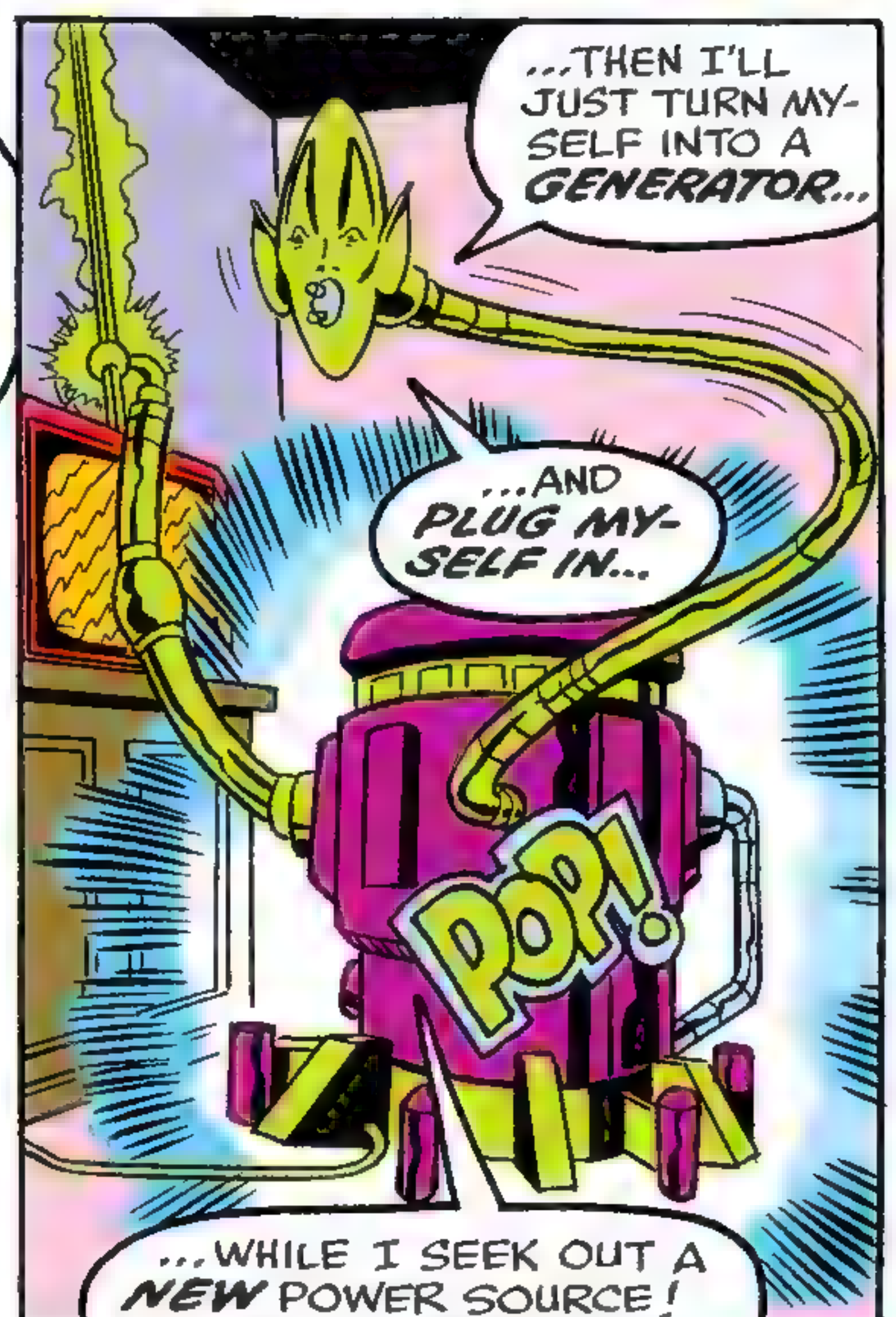
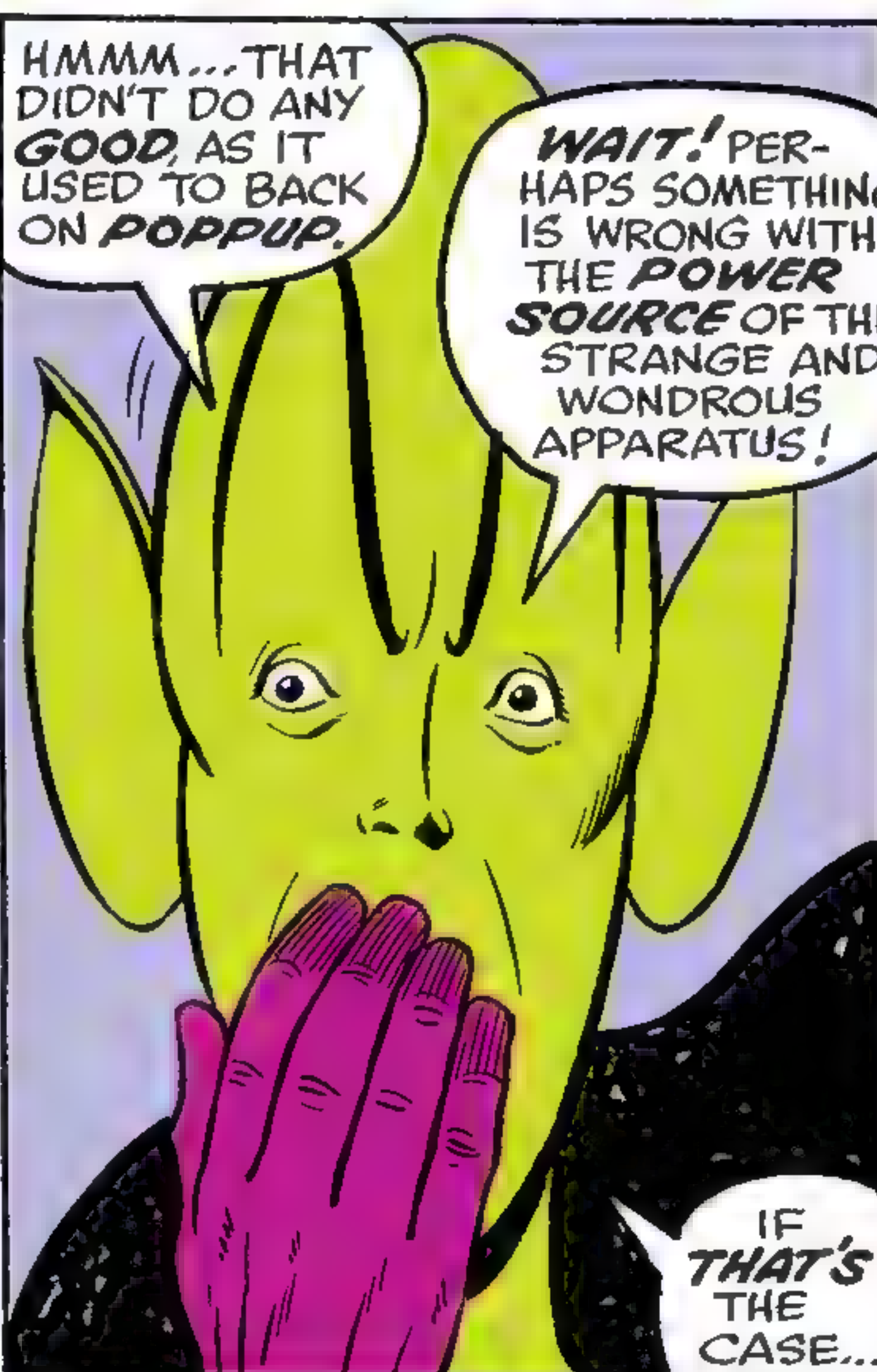
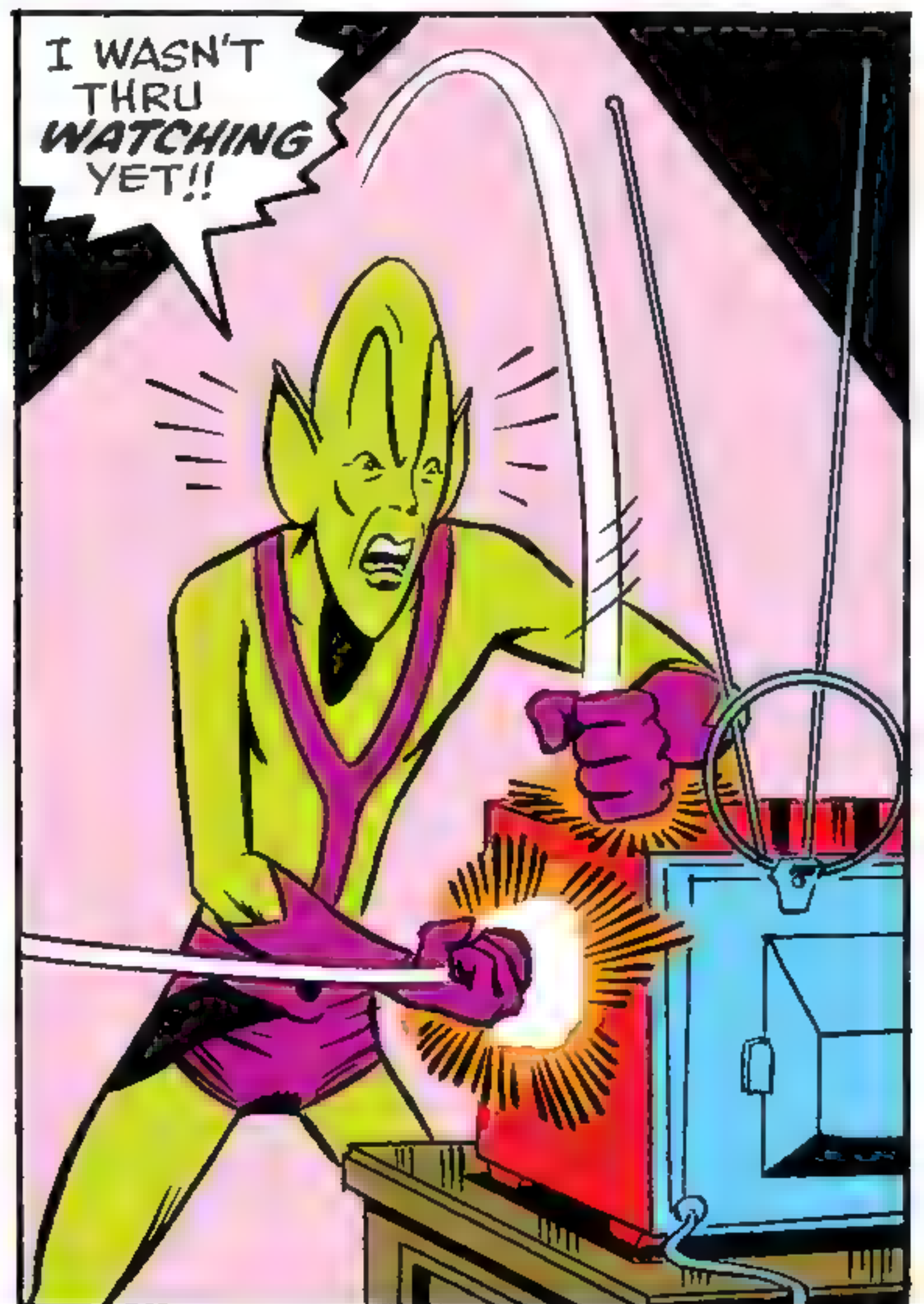
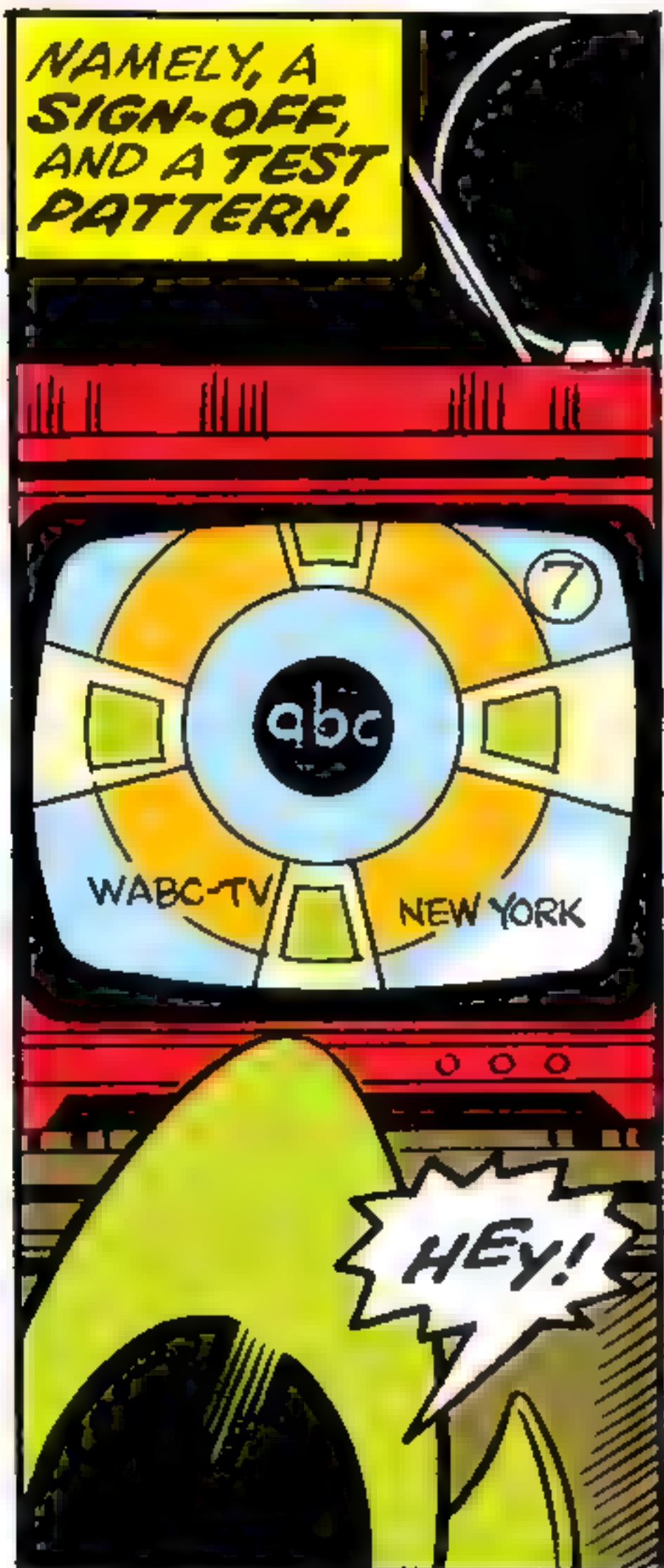
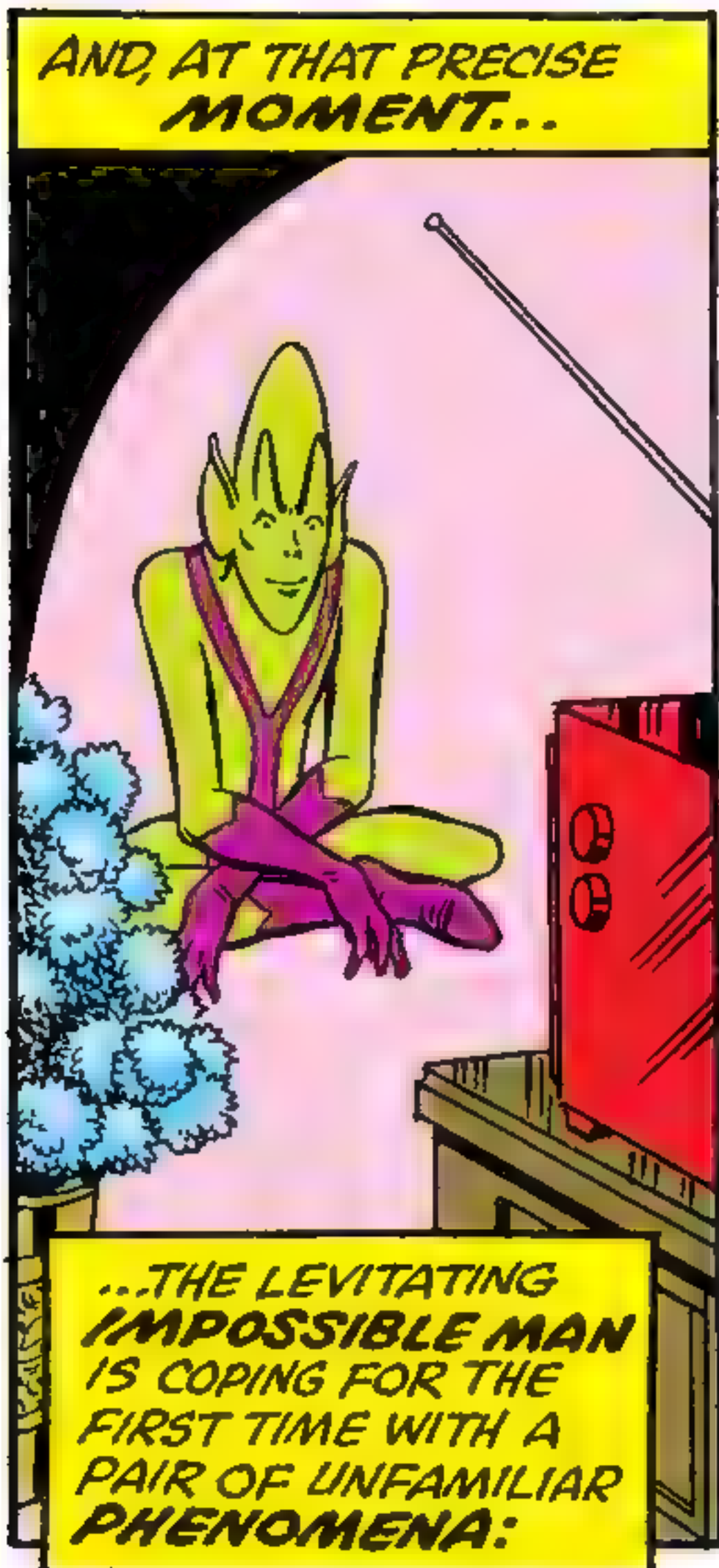
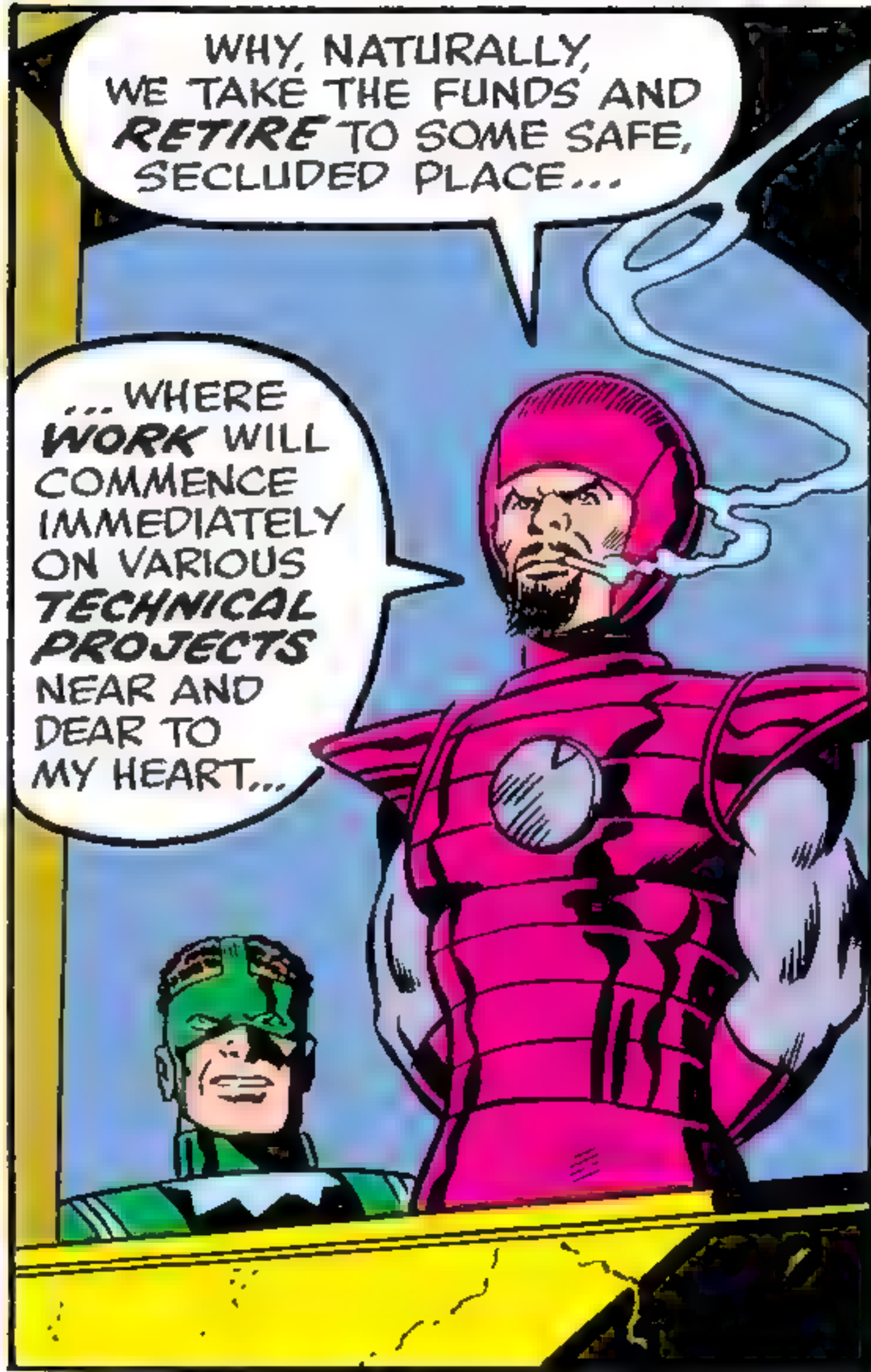
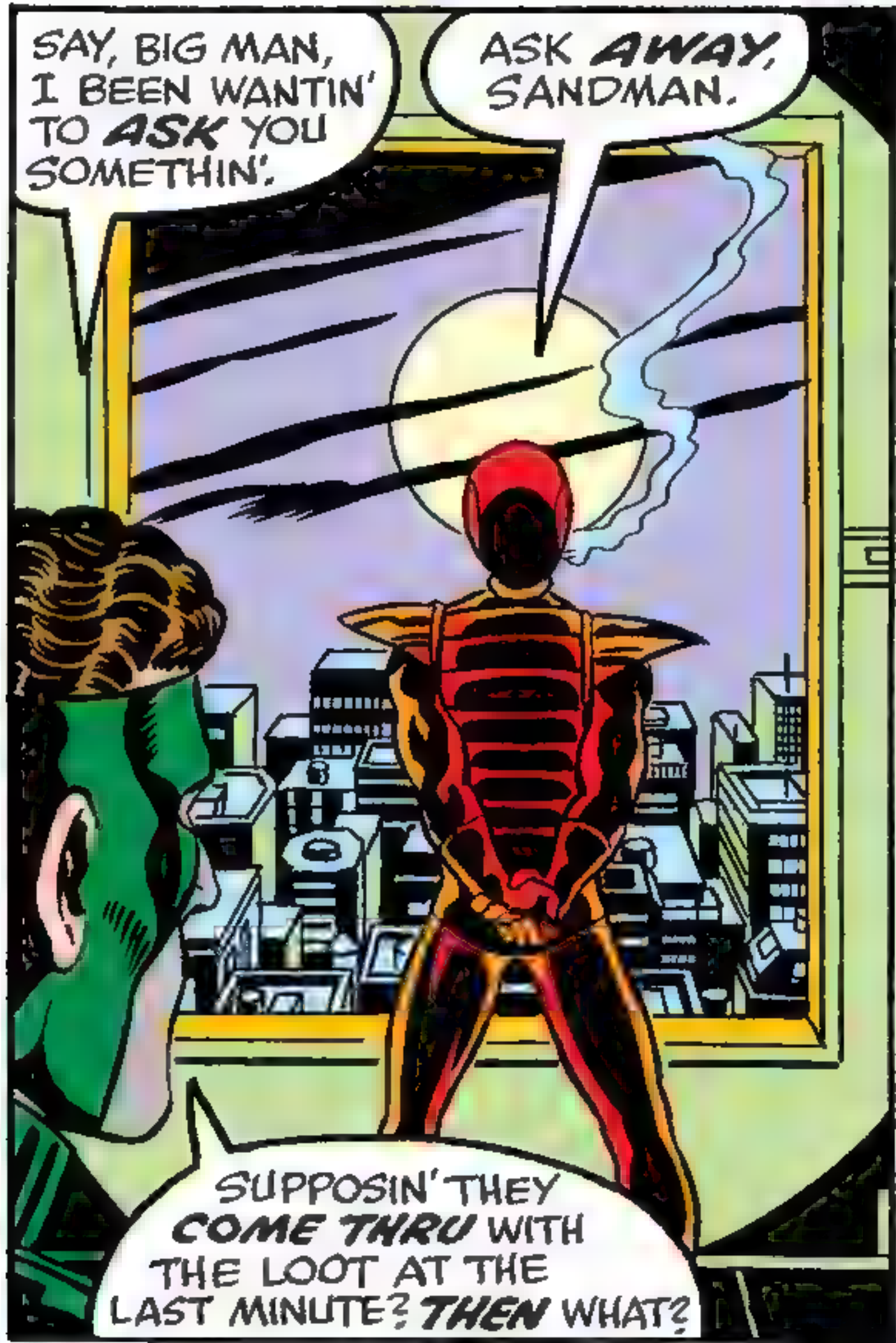
AND, THE **IMPACT** OF THAT EVER-MASSAGING MEDIUM UPON HIM...

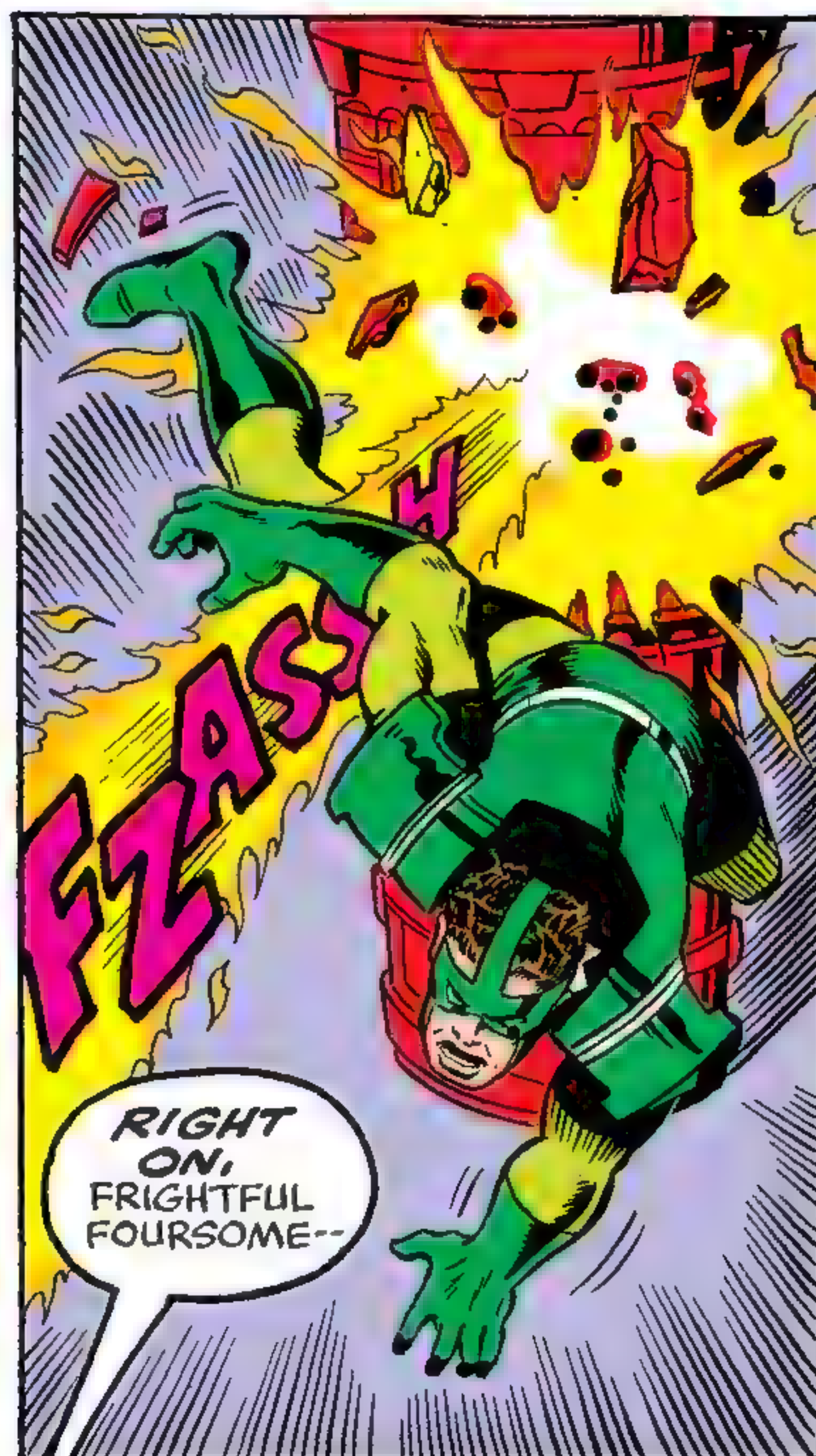
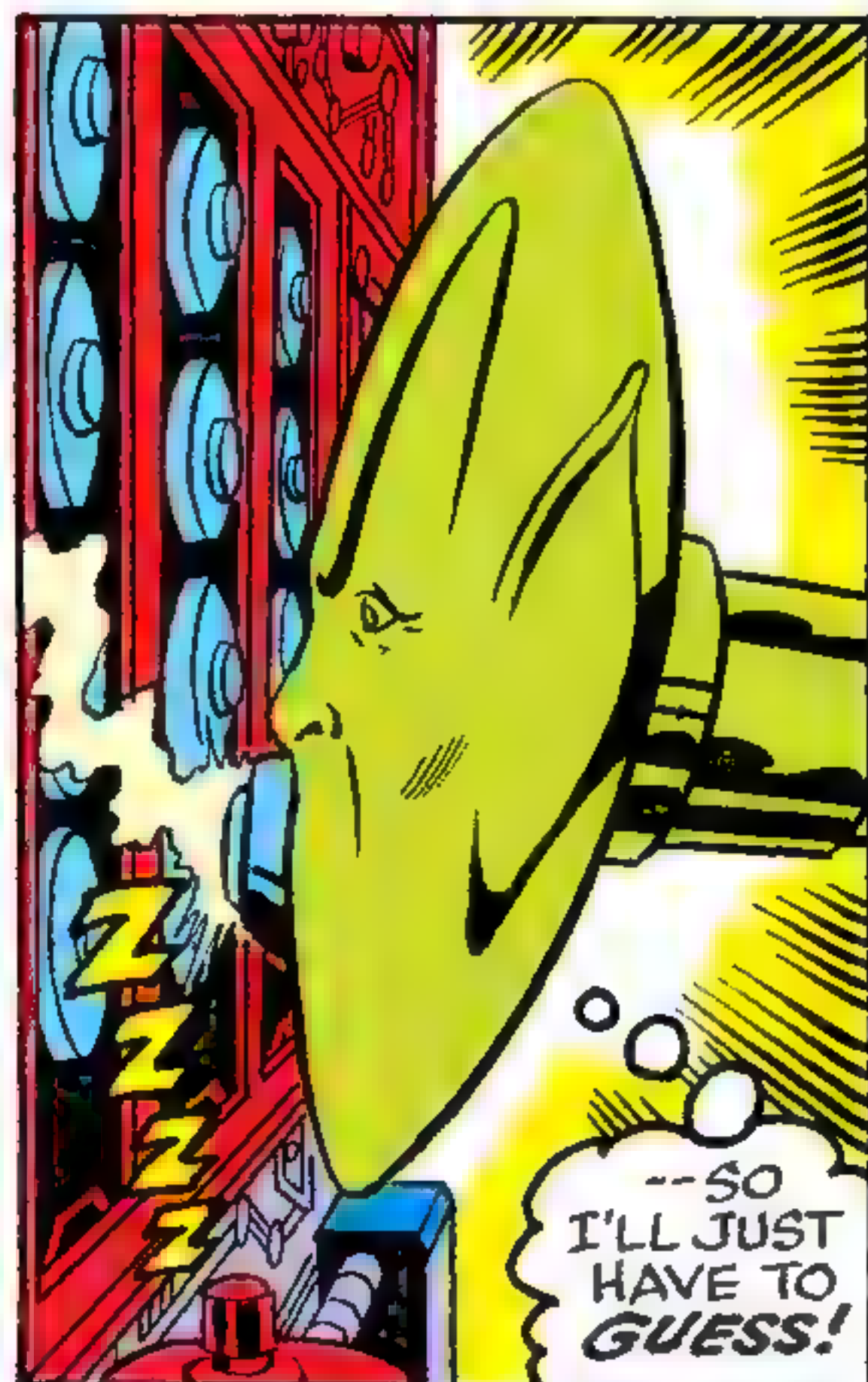
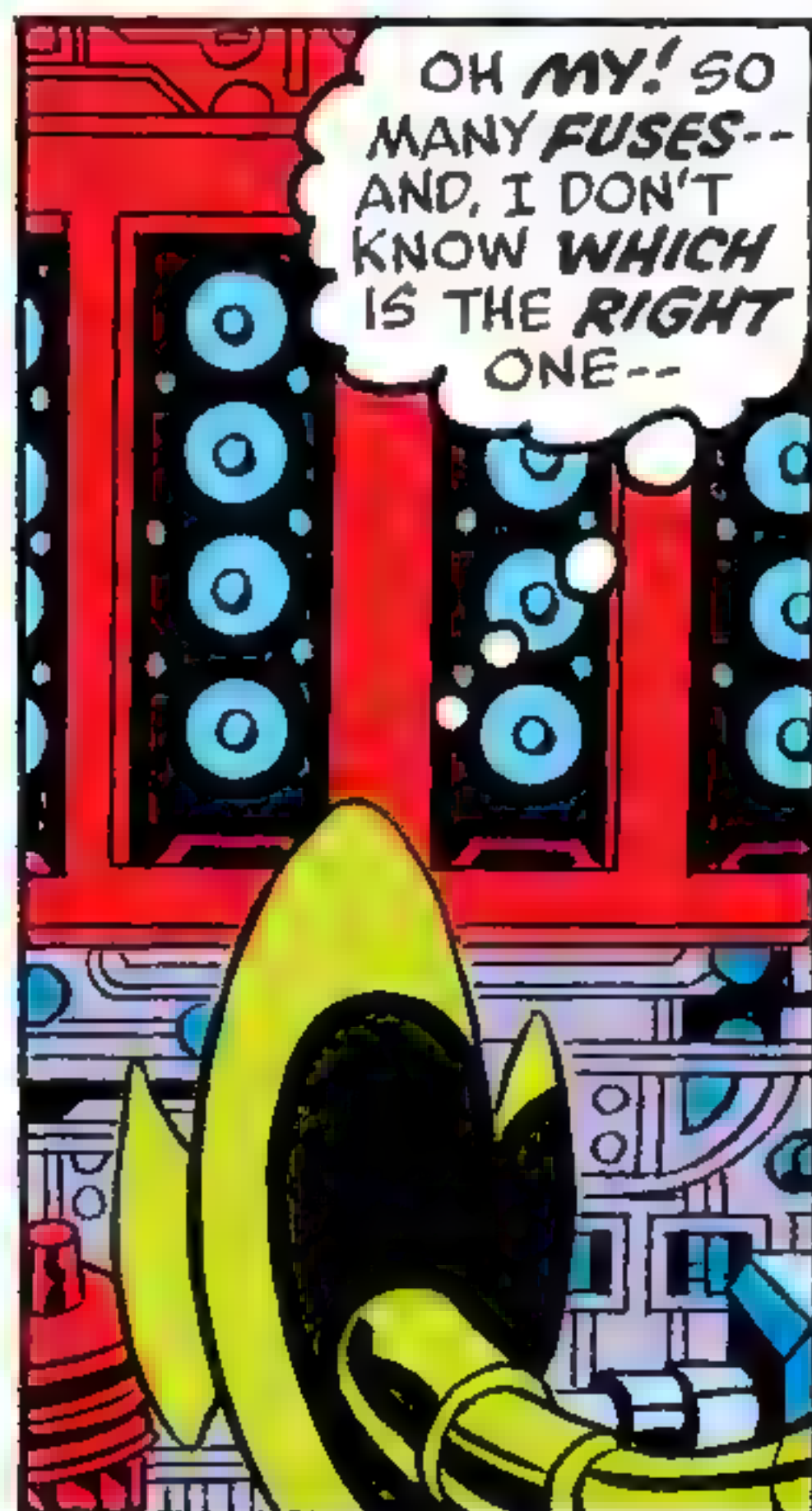
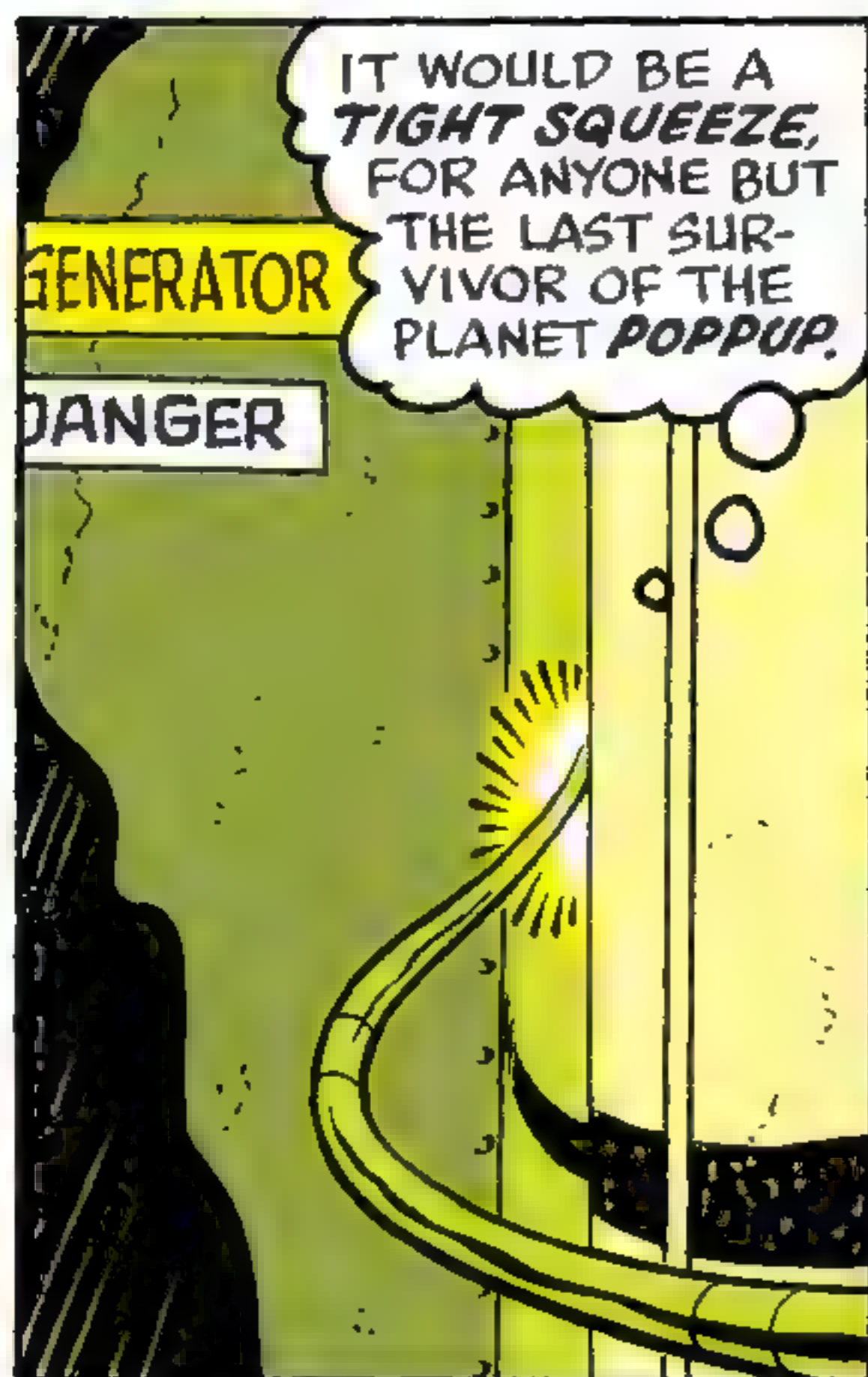
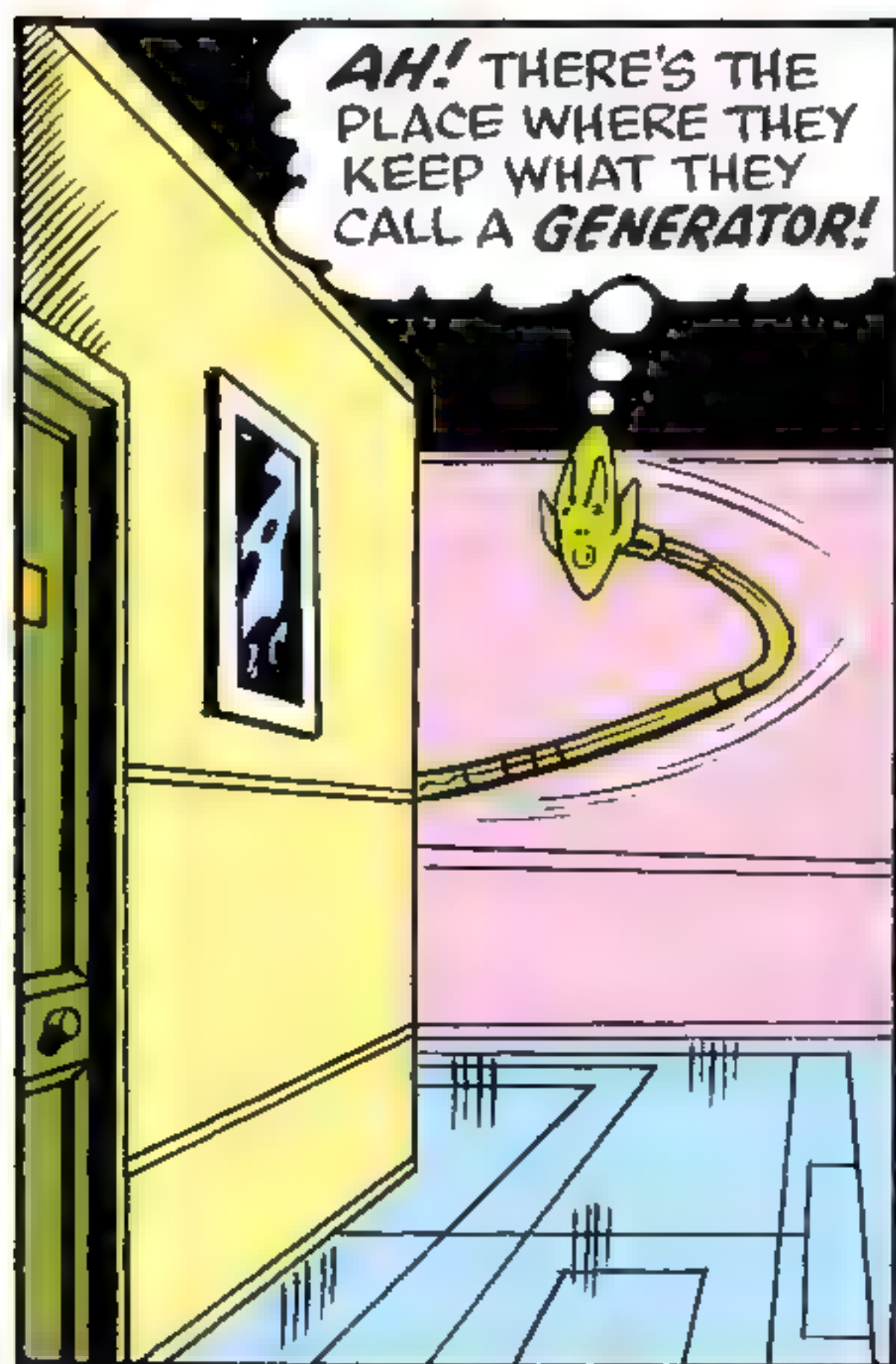
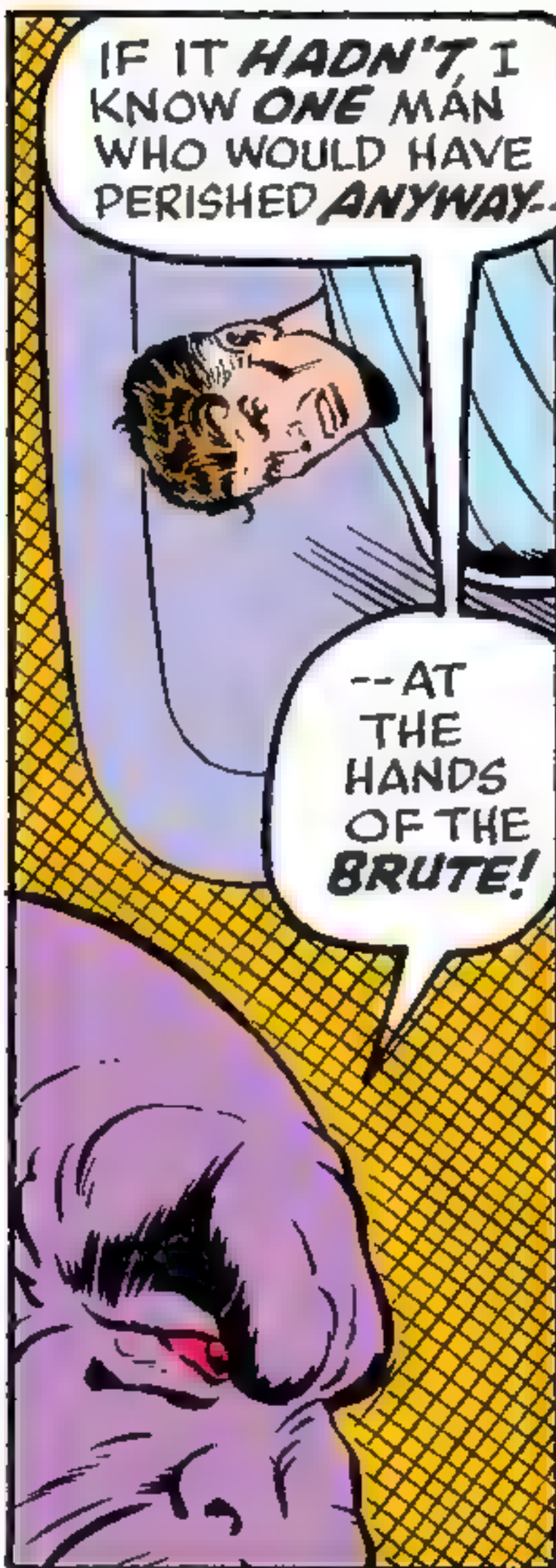
...HAS BEEN TO SAY THE VERY LEAST...

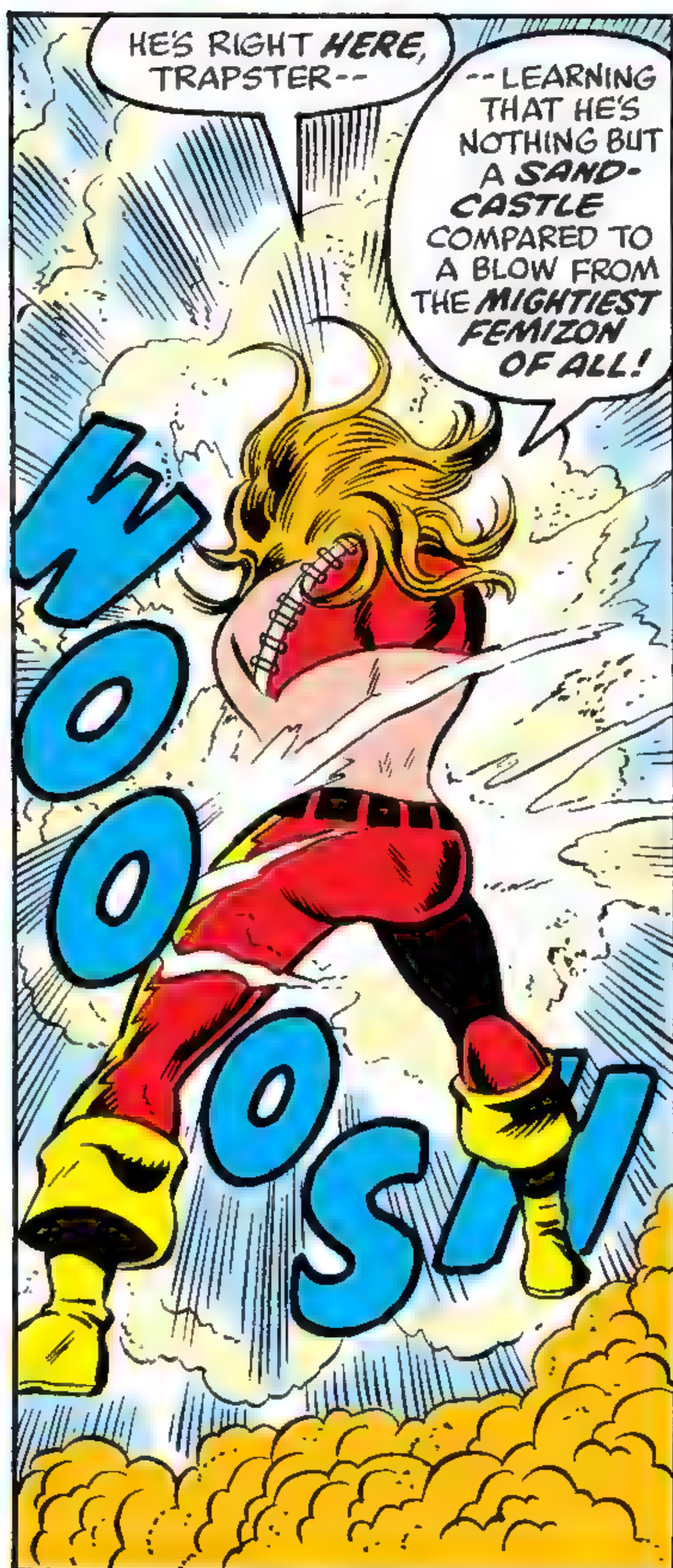
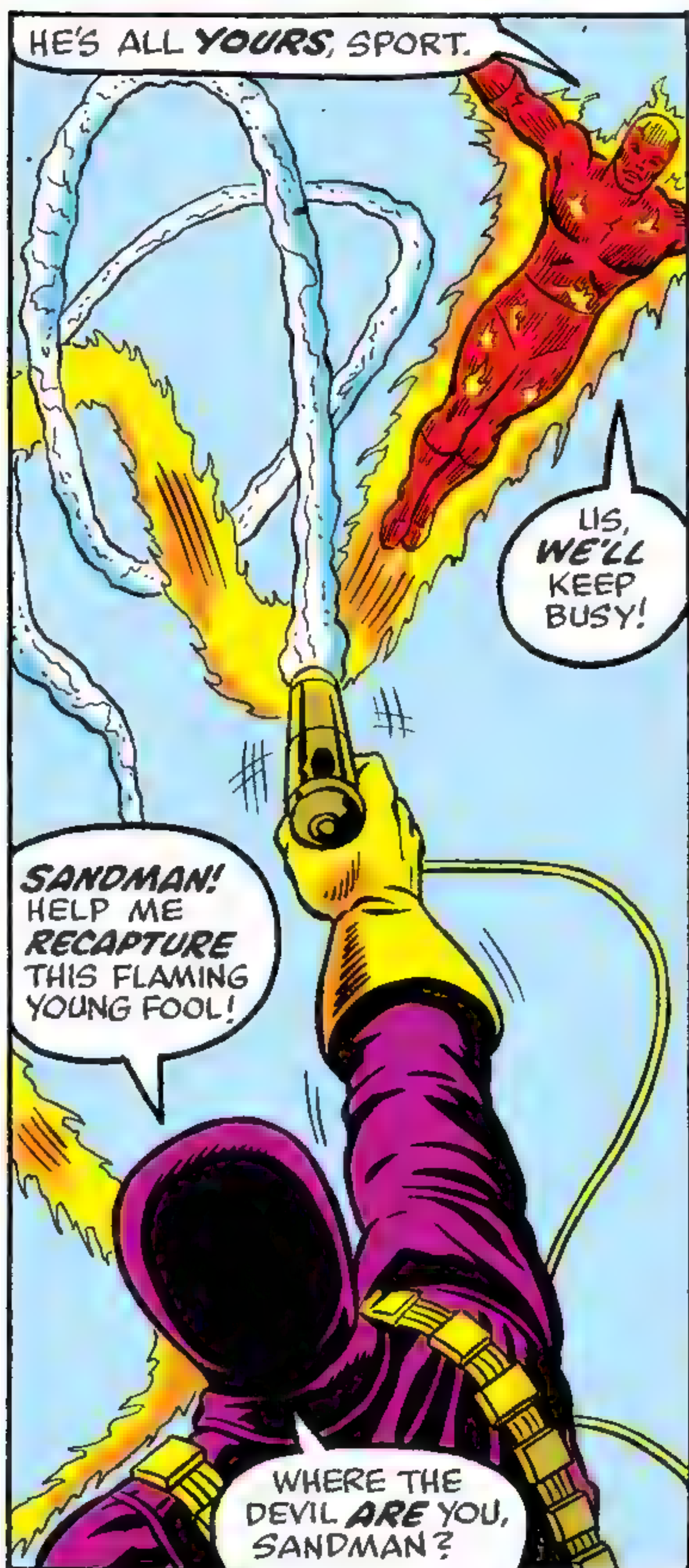
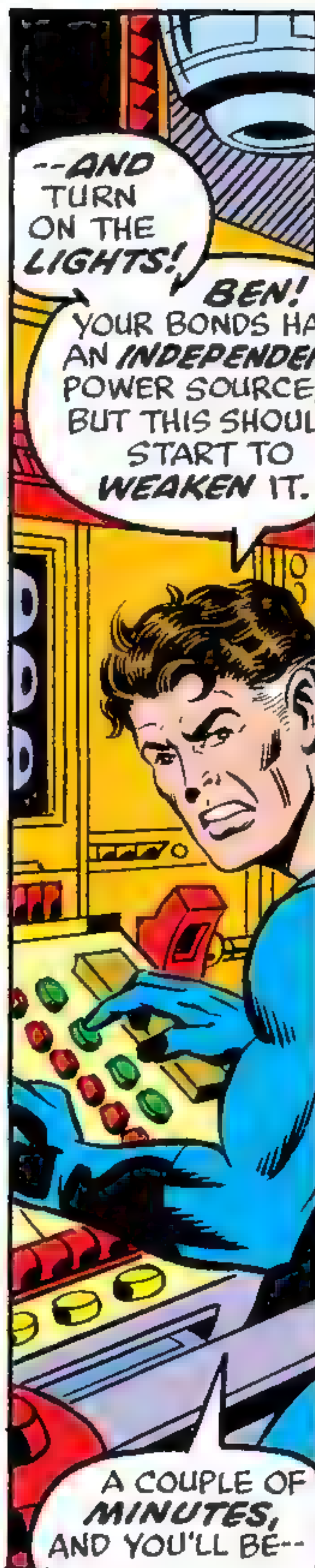
...ENTRANCING!











BUT, NEXT INSTANT, THE MASSIVE FIST HALTS IN MID-AIR, AS--

NO! I-- CAN'T! IT WOULD BE LIKE SLAYING MY OWN BELOVED SUE--

-- WHO'S LAIN FOR MONTHS IN A COMA, BACK ON MY OWN EARTH!*

*AS WITNESSED IN WARLOCK#6 -- R.T.

HE'S STOPPED SHORT-- BUT ANOTHER MOMENT, AND HE MAY KILL SUE!

DUNNO IF I CAN REACH 'EM IN TIME, PAL.

IF YOU CAN JUST REACH OVER AN' GRAB HIS ARM FOR A SECOND--

I--I'M TRYING, BEN--

BUT, MY STRETCHING POWER-- IS GONE!!

BEN! YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE HER-- FOR ME!

NOPE, OL' BUDDY-- NOT EVEN FOR YOU, THE LUCKY STIFF WHO'S HER HUSBAND--

I'M DOIN' THIS FOR ME!

SUZIE'S MY FRIEND AS WELL AS YOUR WIFE, AND THAT'S HOW COME--

IT'S CLOBBERING TIME!

ARRR

AMAZING! THAT ORANGE-SCALED MONSTER'S BLOW HAS STAGGERED EVEN THE BRUTE.

PERHAPS I'D BETTER FLEE, BEFORE--

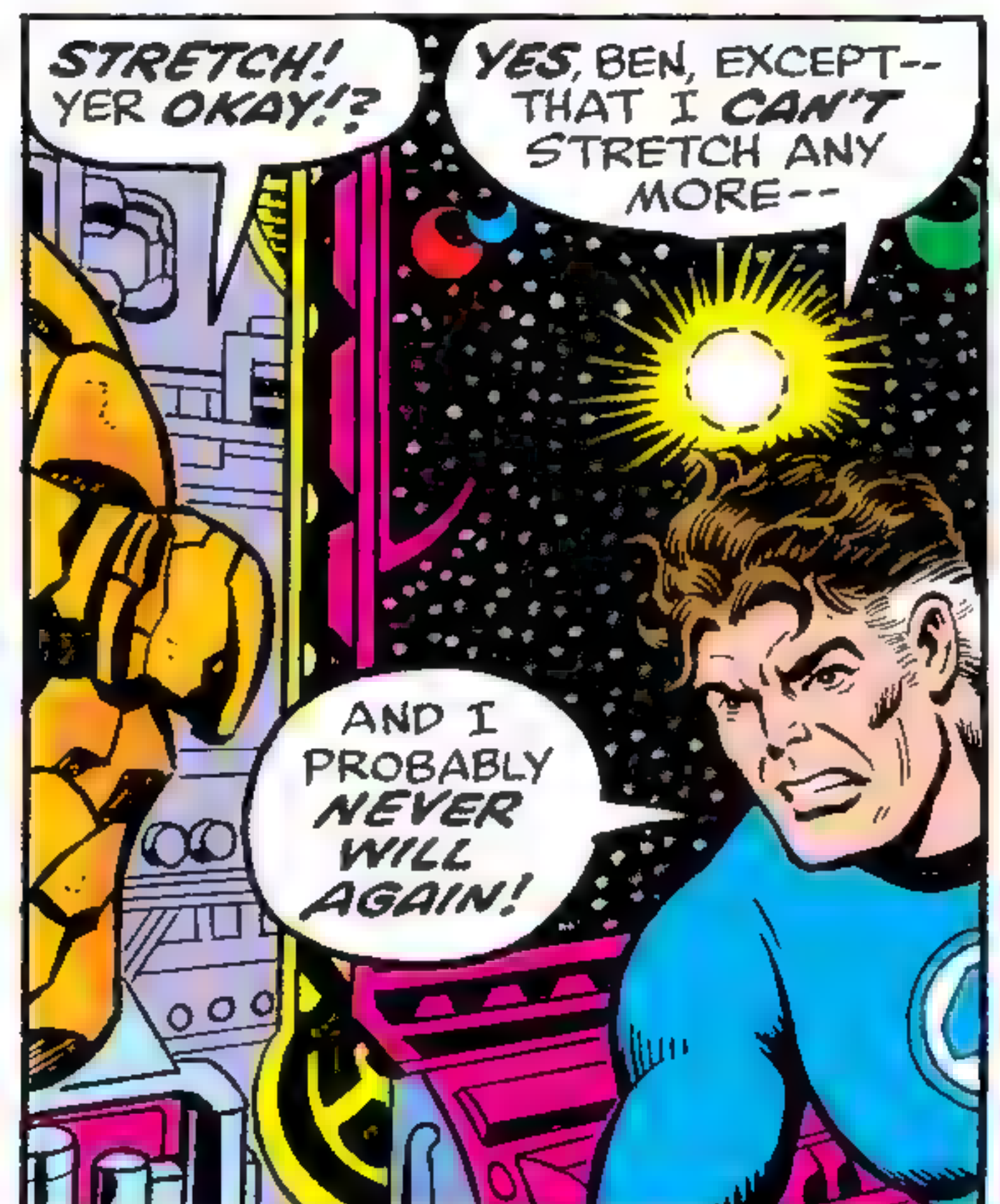
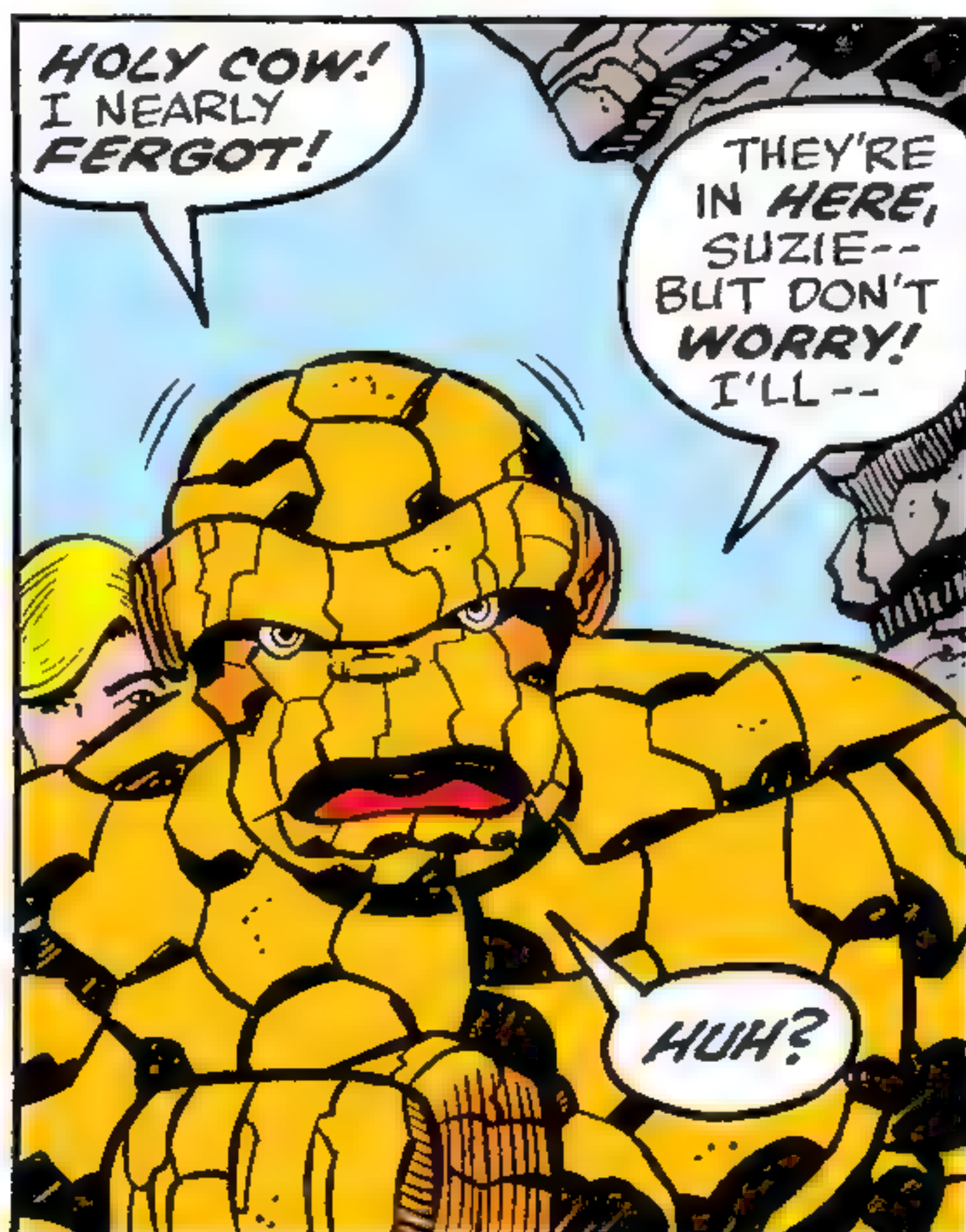
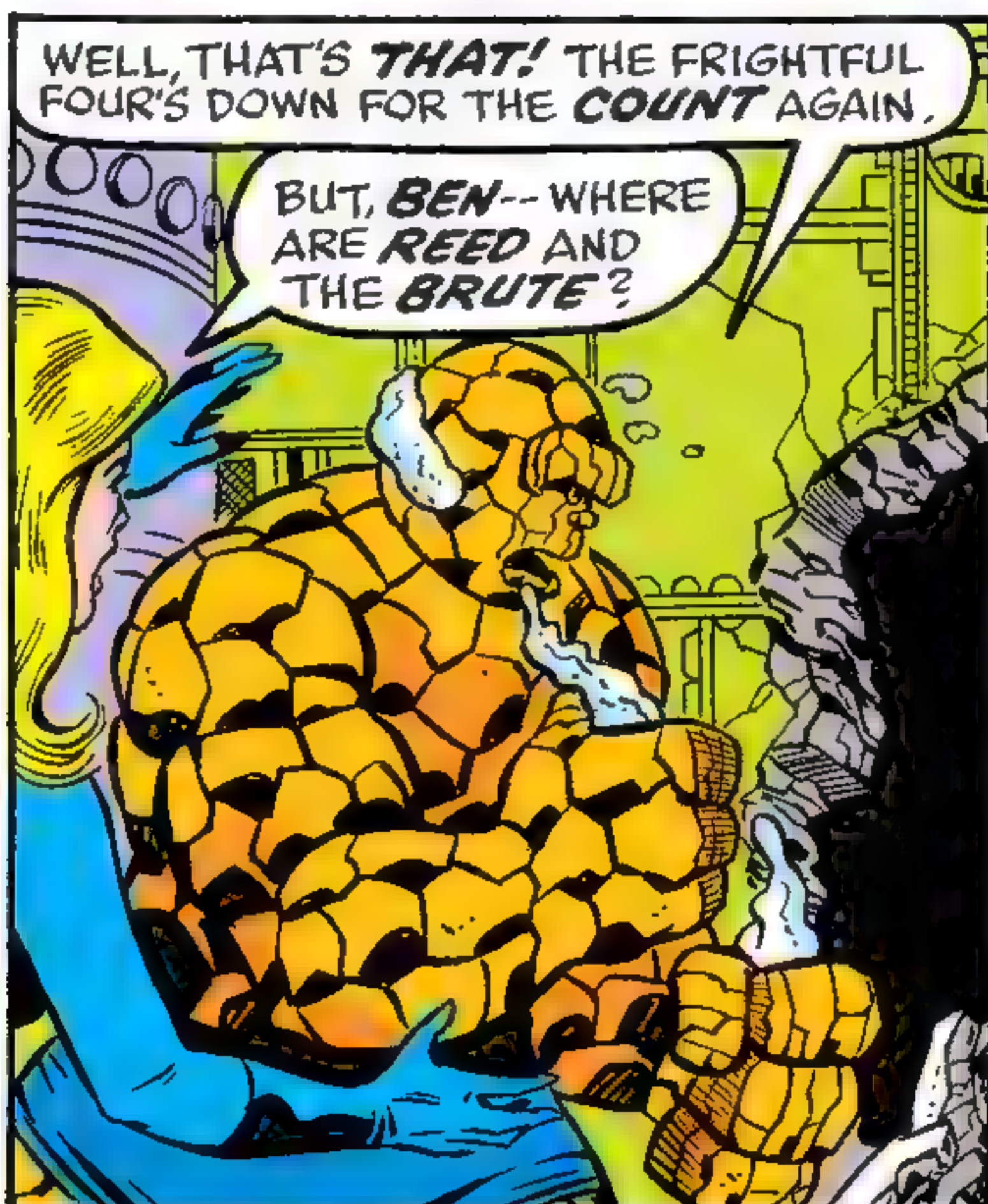
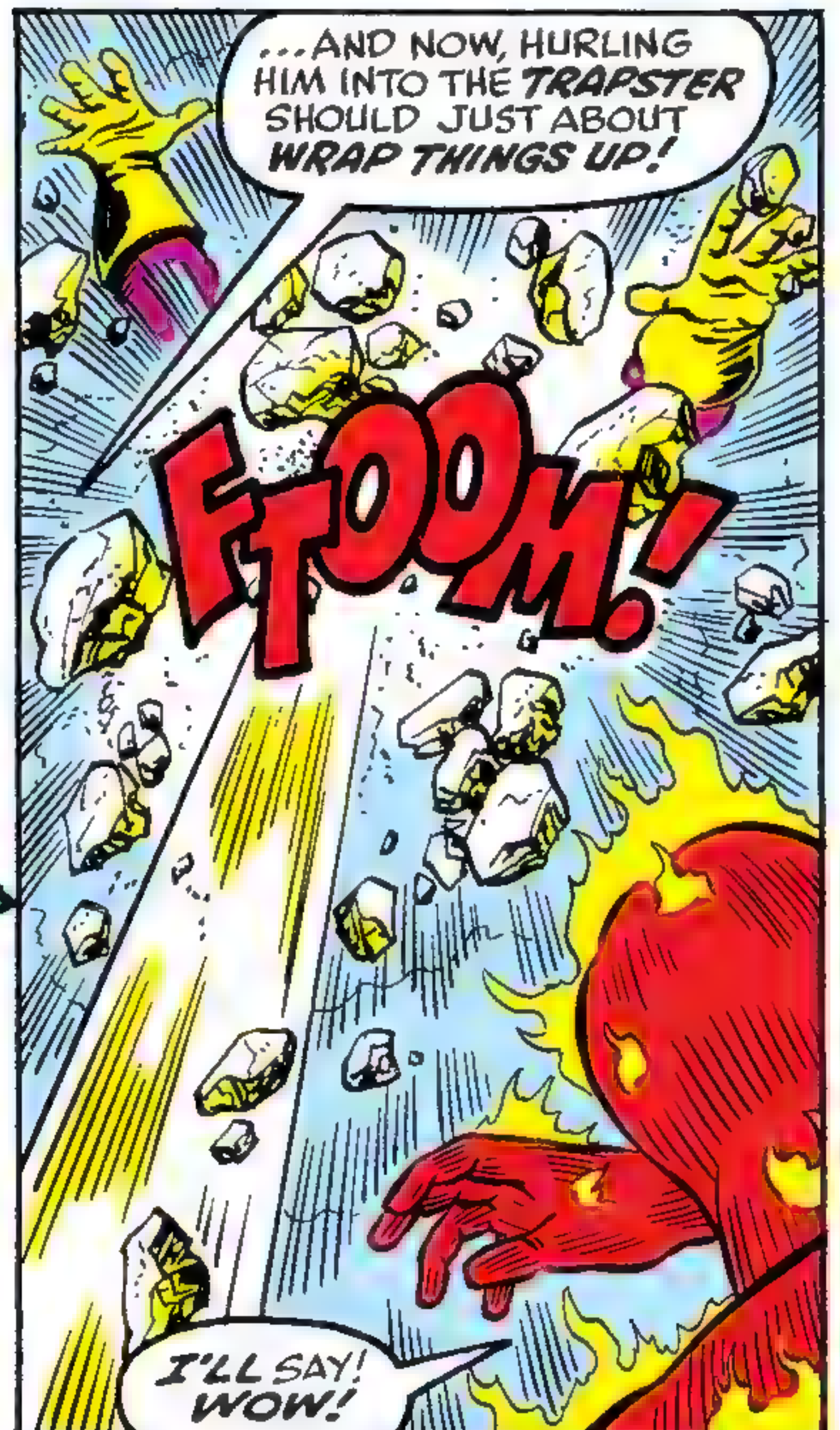
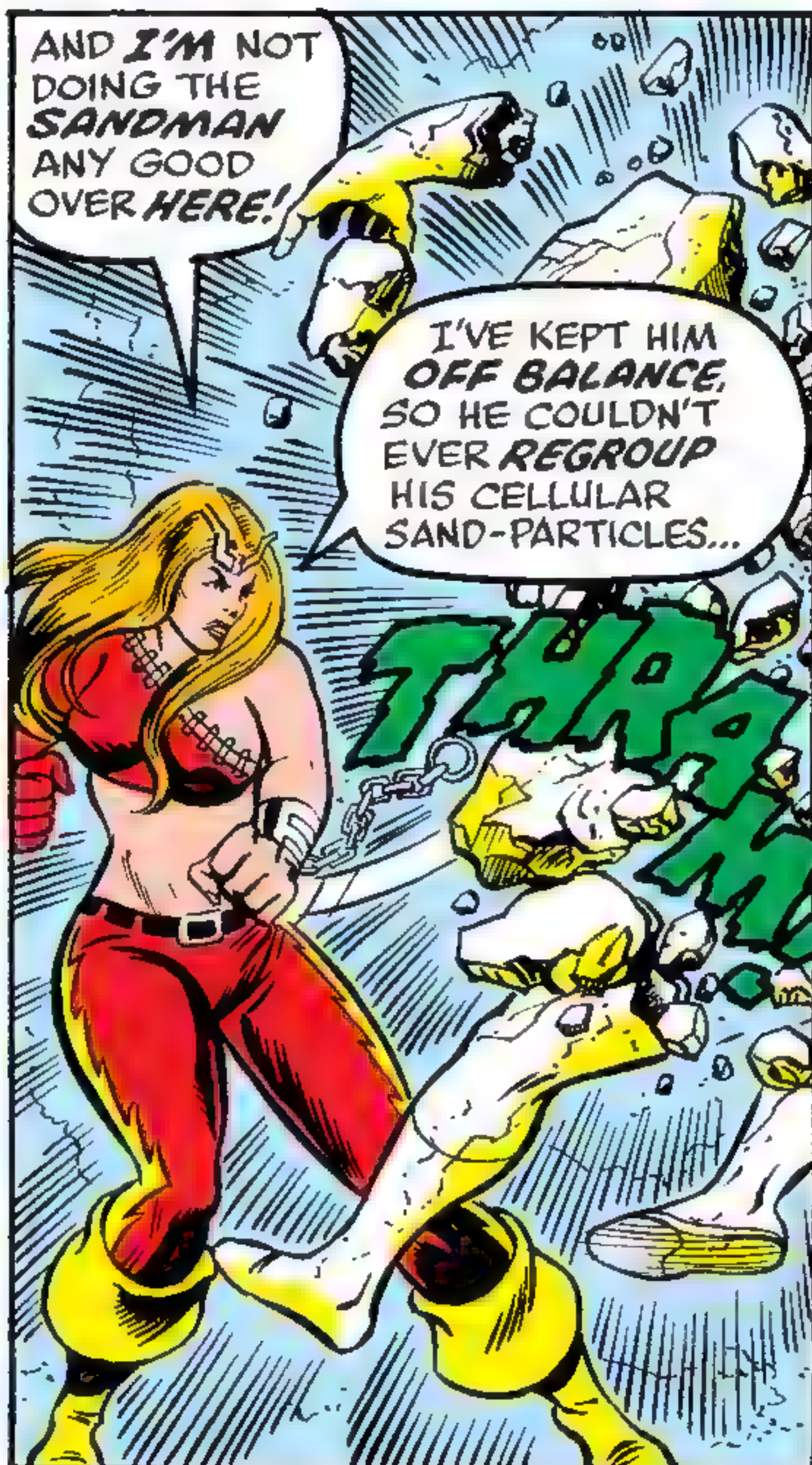
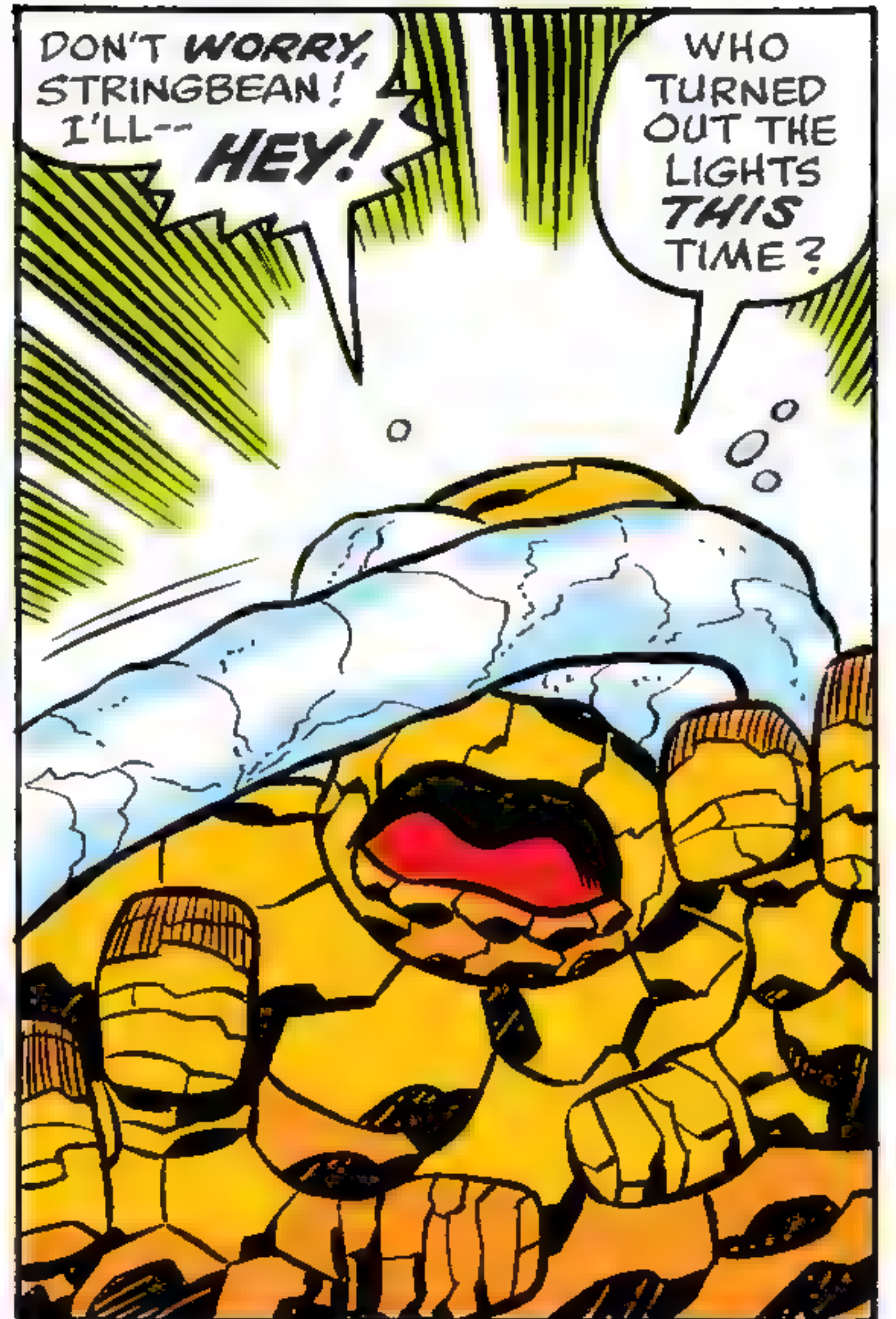
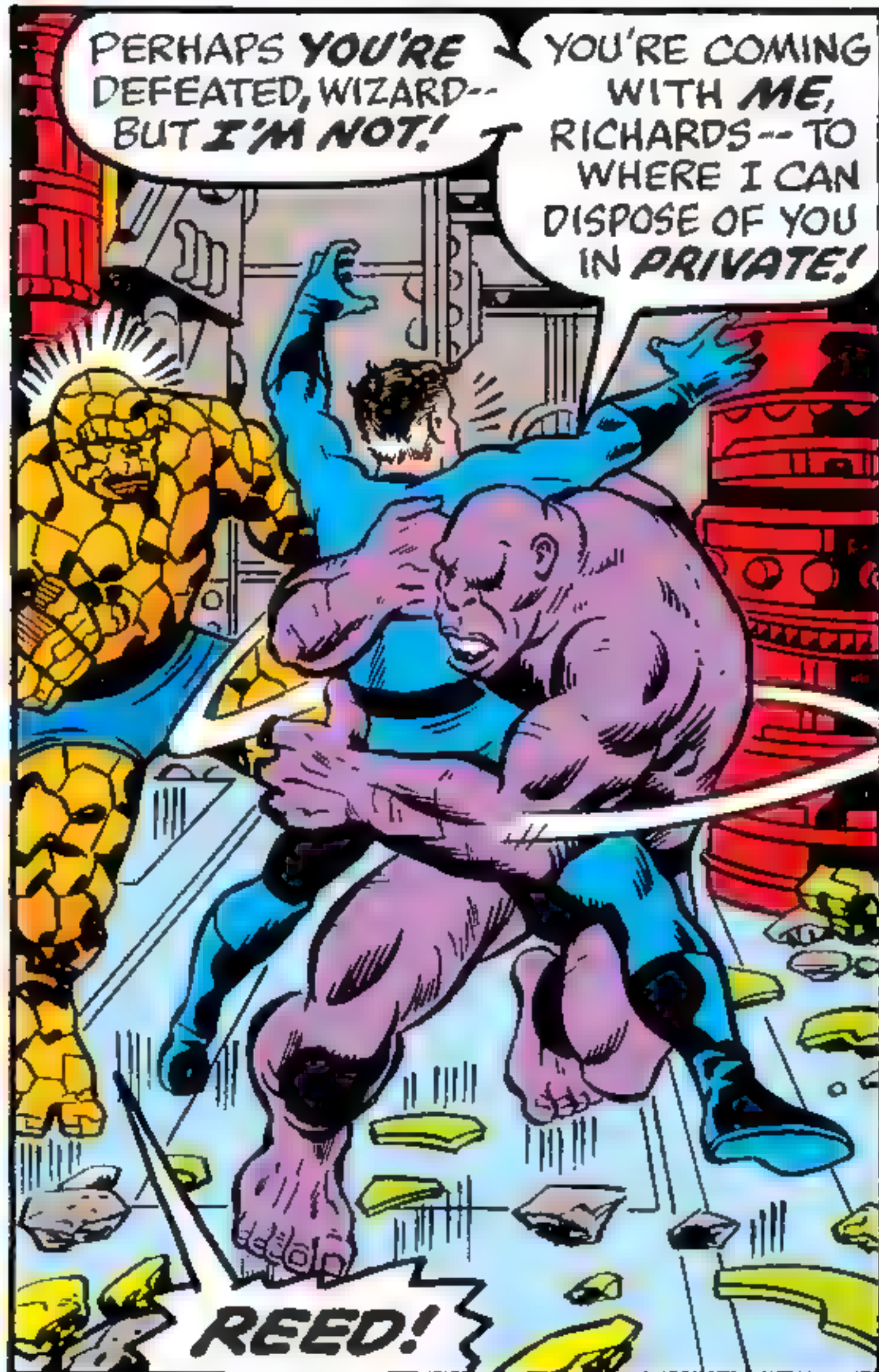
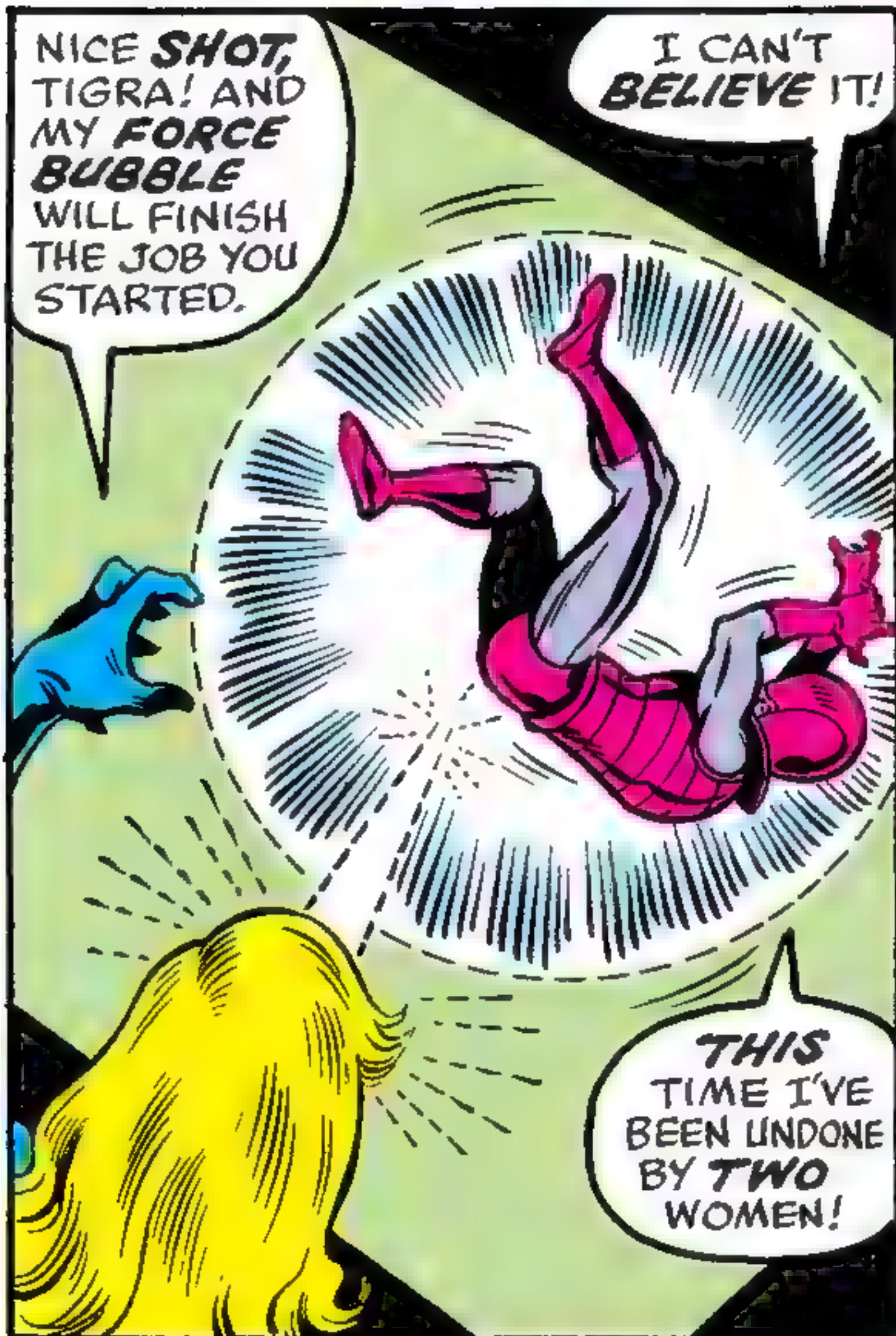
MADE IT-- AT LAST!

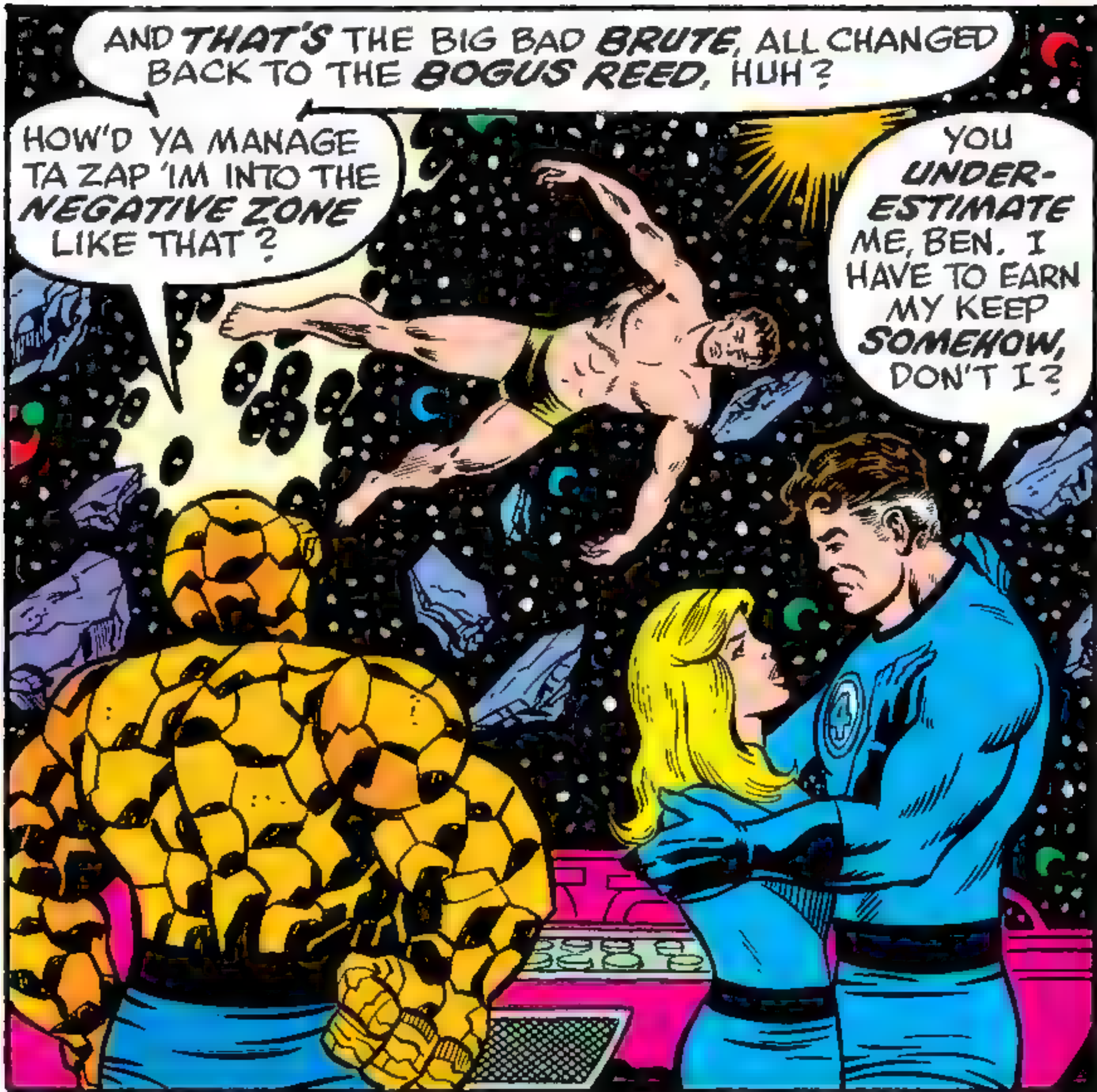
THE WIZARD'S ANTI-GRAVITY DISC CARRIED ME HIGH ENOUGH--

--TO LET ME BRACE MY FEET AGAINST THE CEILING--

-- AND DO THIS!

OOO F





NEXT ISSUE: **A TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST!**

FANTASTIC
FOUR

30¢
©

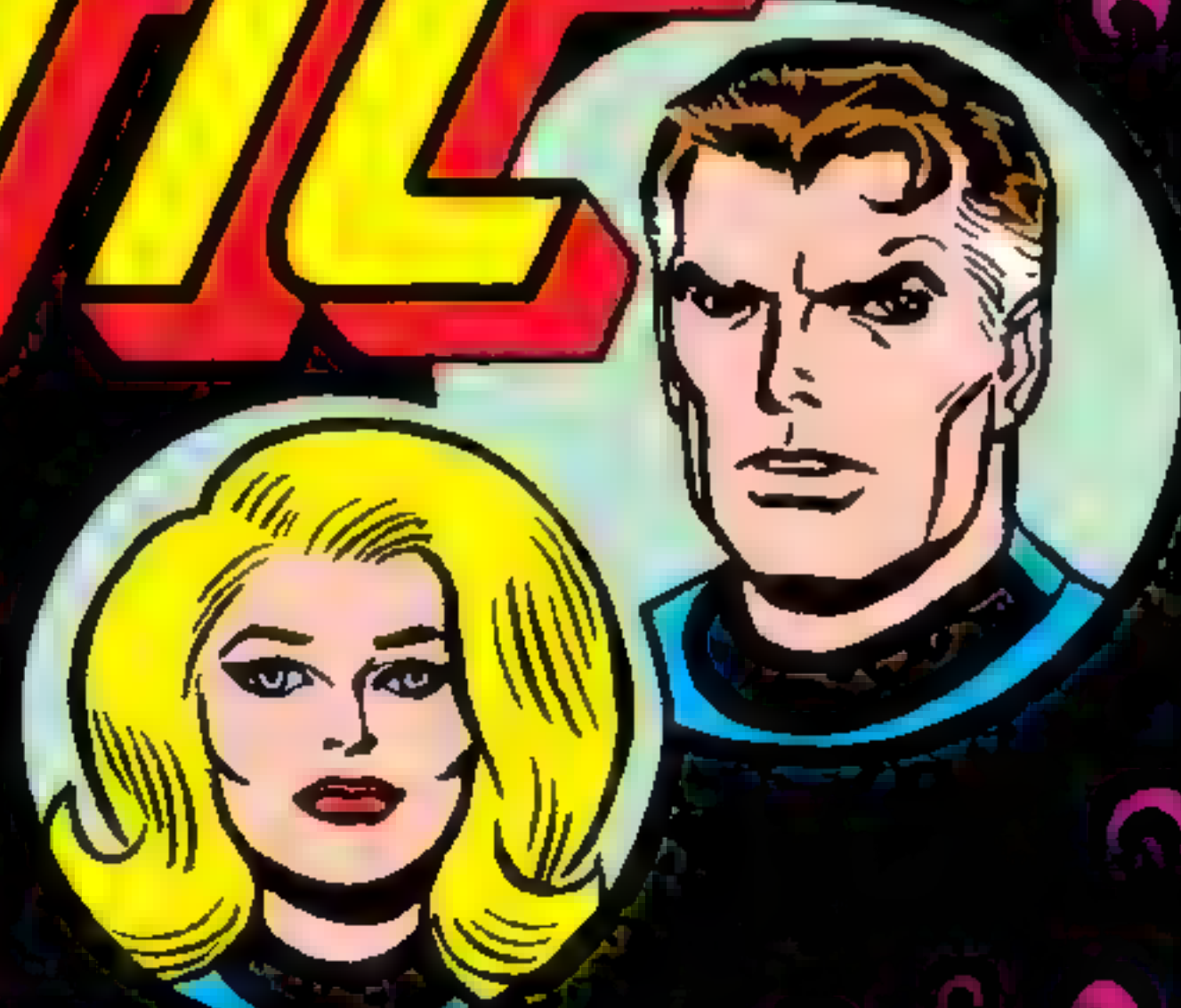
179
FEB
02962

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR®



© 1976 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

THE SHOCKER
YOU NEVER
EXPECTED
TO SEE!!

THE FABULOUS FF, AT THE MERCY OF THE
DEADLIEST SUPER-VILLAIN OF ALL--
REED RICHARDS!



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human!
MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

ROY THOMAS * GERRY CONWAY * RON WILSON & JOE SINNOTT * JOE ROSEN, LETTERER
WRITER/EDITOR PLOT; SCRIPT PP. 1-3 ARTISTS/ STORYTELLERS G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST

A PLACE WITHOUT
TIME, A TIME WITH-
OUT PLACE: IF YOU'RE
THE SORT OF PERSON
WHO NEEDS LABELS--

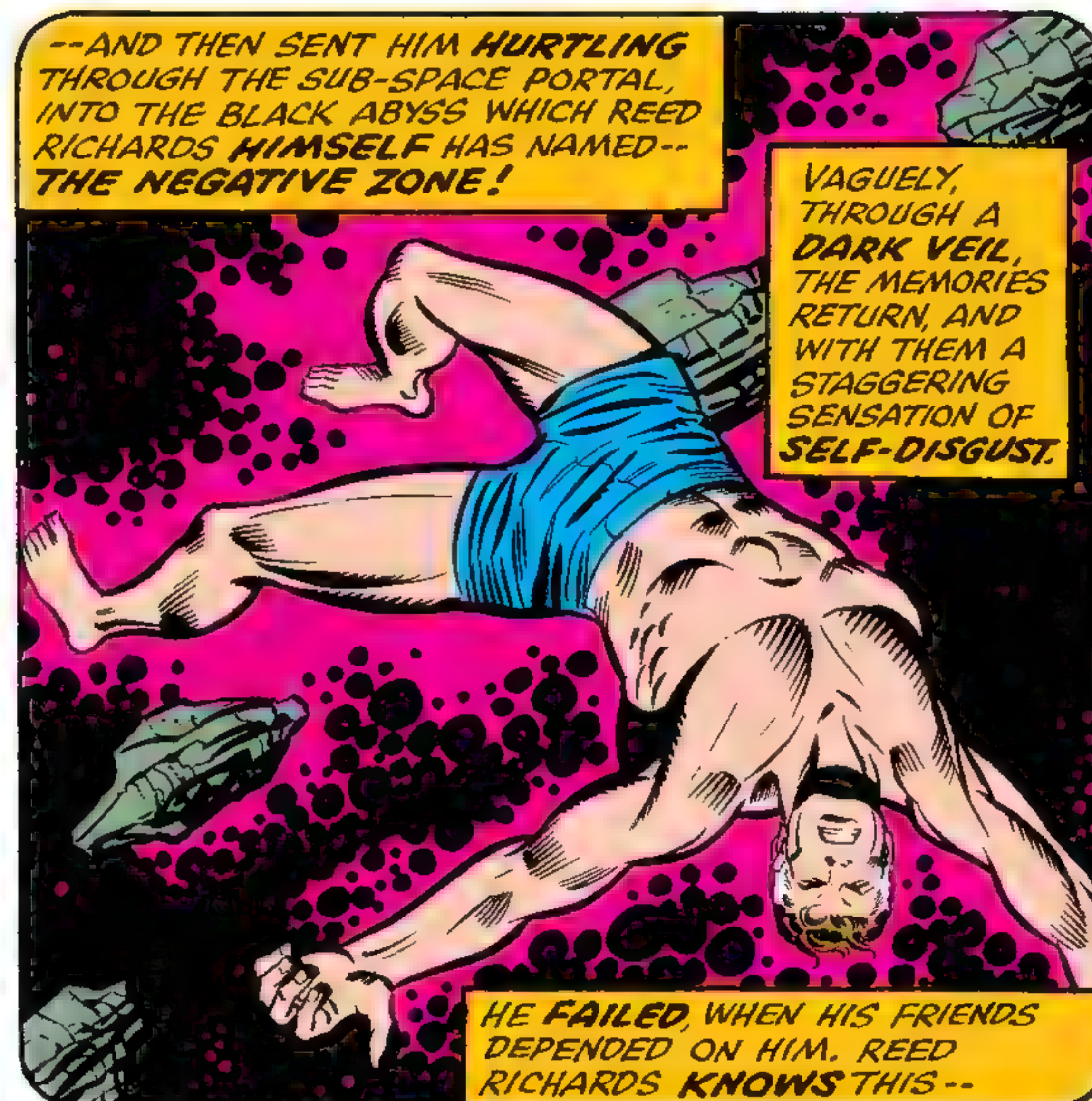
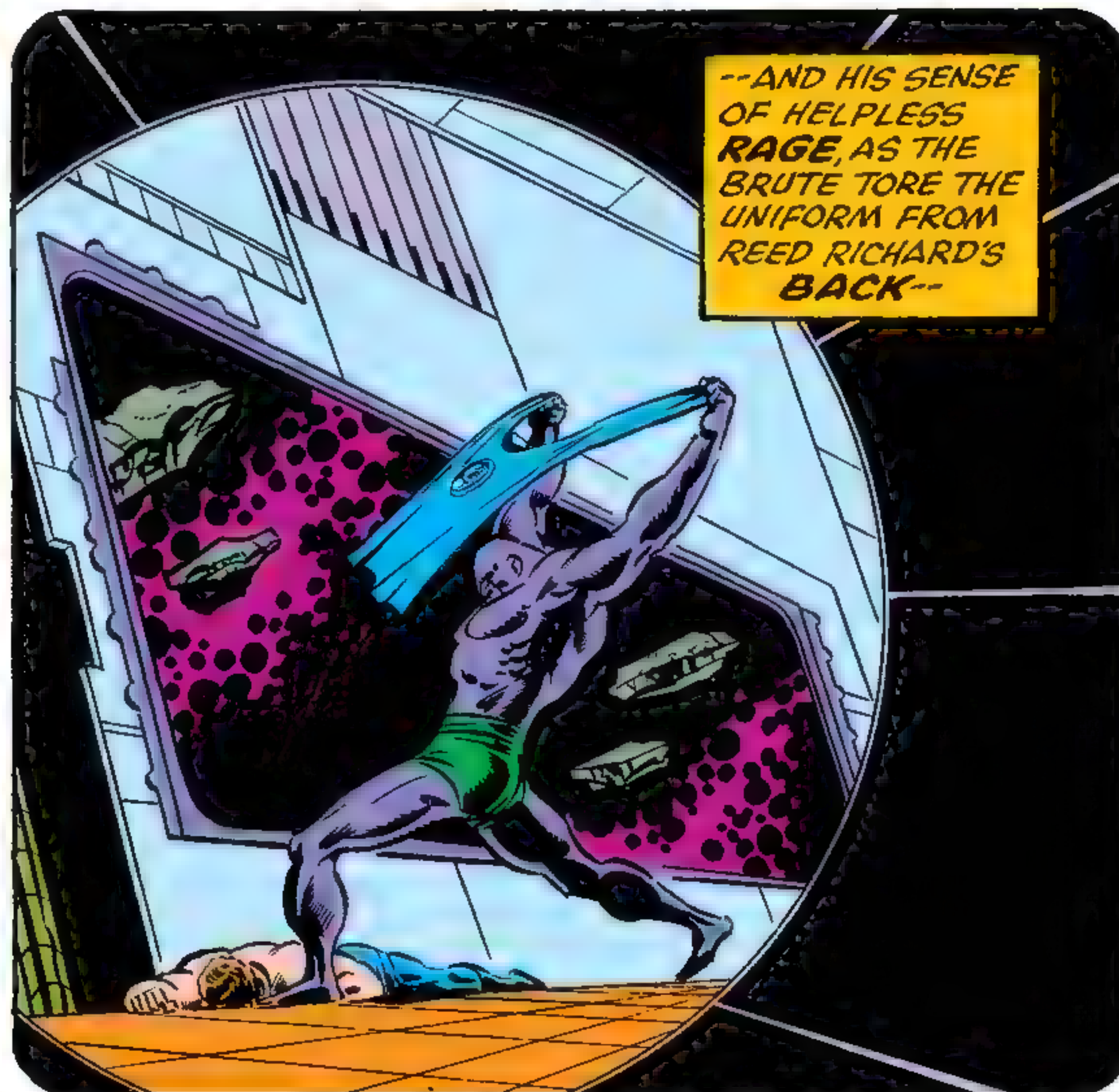
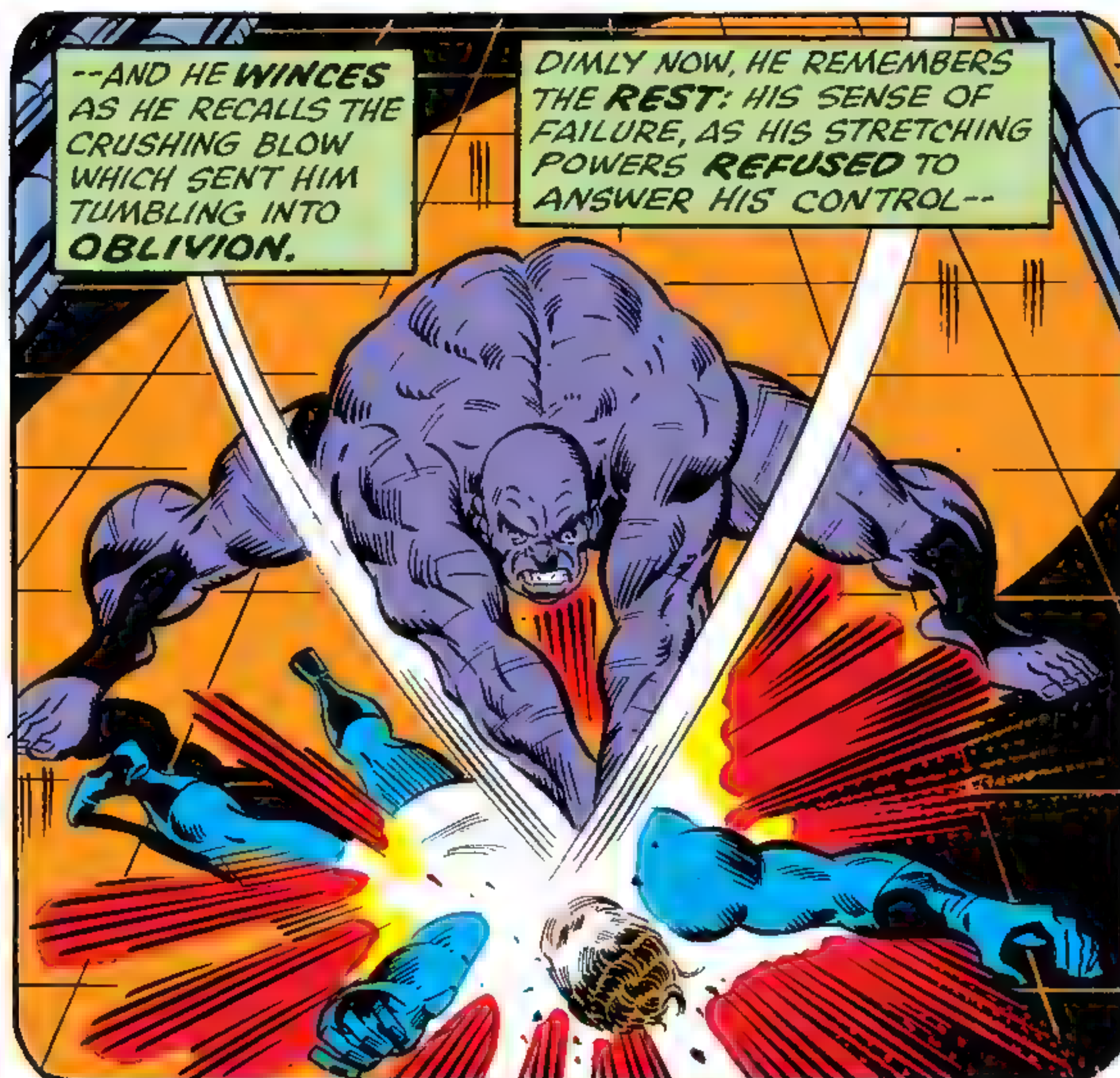
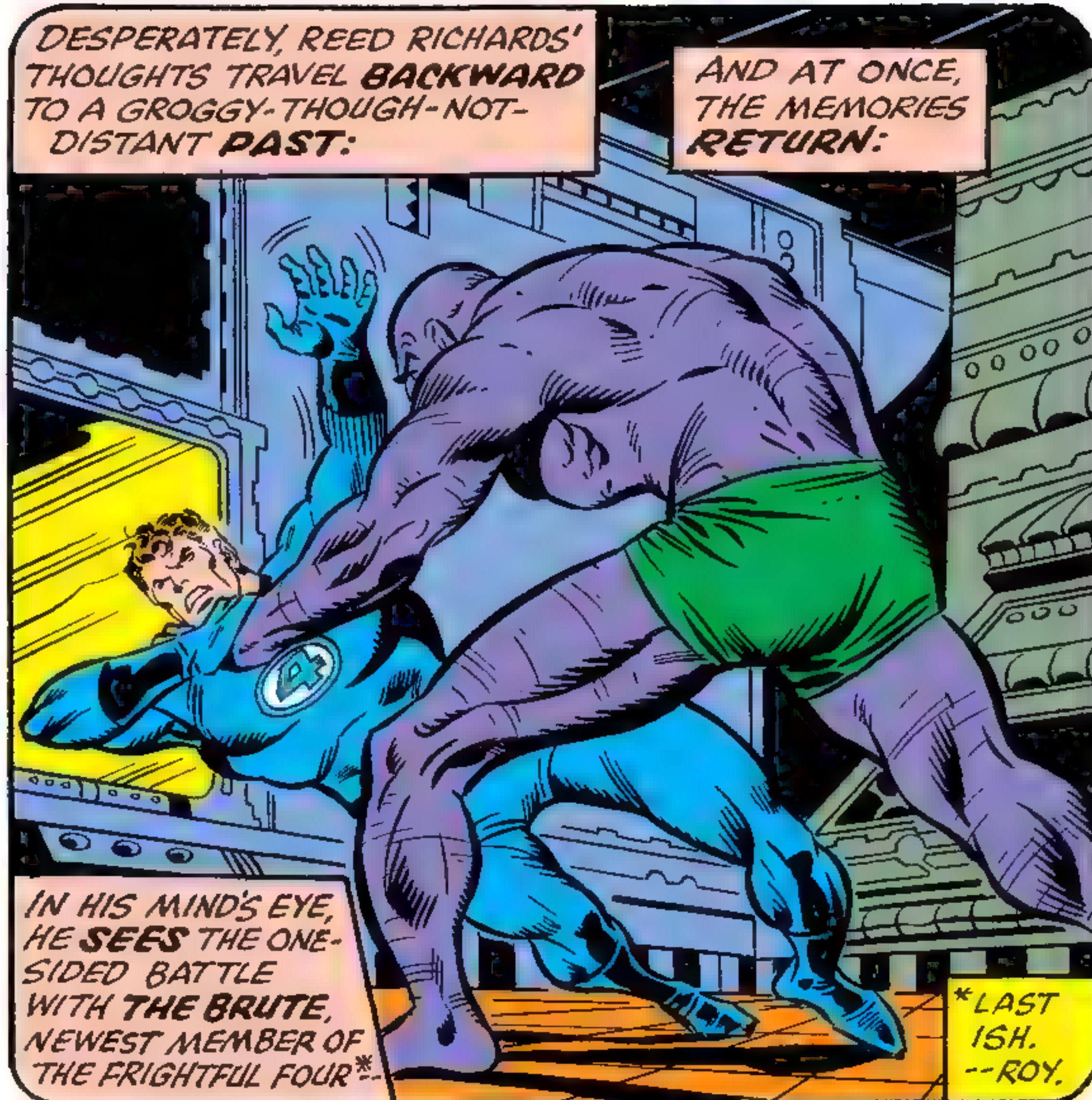
--YOU CAN CALL
THIS SUB-SPACE,
OR--THE NEGA-
TIVE ZONE!

A ROBINSON CRUSOE IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

BUT IF YOU'RE REED
RICHARDS, FLOATING
HALF-UNCONSCIOUS
AMID THE REMAINS OF
A LONG-LOST WORLD,
YOU MIGHT VERY WELL
CALL IT--**NIGHTMARE!**

THAT
IS-- IF YOU
LIVED TO
CALL IT
ANYTHING
AT ALL!

SUE...



--AND FOR AN INSTANT, IT ALMOST FILLS HIM WITH **DESPAIR**.

THEN, BECAUSE HE IS REED RICHARDS, LEADER OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**, HE THROWS OFF THE PASSING EMOTION, AND TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO A MORE **PRESSING CONCERN**--

--**SURVIVAL!**

WHATEVER SUE'S POSITION, I CERTAINLY CAN'T HELP HER IF I'M **DEAD**--

--SO IT'S TIME I REALIZED-- I'M **NOT** ALONE--

--AND SOME OF MY **FELLOW** INHABITANTS OF THE ZONE ARE **HUNGRY**--

--AND ARE GOING TO TRY TO-- **KILL ME!**

UHHH! TALK ABOUT WELL-TIMED THOUGHTS!

AS MY OLD FRIEND **BENJAMIN GRIMM** WOULD SAY--

--"STOP THINKING, MASTERMIND-- AND START MOVING!"

I MIGHT NOT BE IN THE **THING'S** CLASS AS A **FIGHTER**--

--BUT I DIDN'T SPEND THE **SECOND WORLD WAR** AS A **DESK JOCKEY**, EITHER!

IF I JUDGE THE ANGLE OF MY KICK JUST **RIGHT**--!

I **DID** IT!

THOSE SUB-SPACE MONSTERS WILL BE HALFWAY ACROSS THE **GALAXY** BEFORE THEY CAN **SLOW DOWN**--

--WHICH MEANS I'LL HAVE A **BREATHER** BEFORE FIGHTING MY **NEXT BATTLE**.

I SUPPOSE I'D BETTER GET **ACCUSTOMED** TO SUDDEN COMBAT.

IF SUE DOESN'T COME AFTER ME **SOON**... I JUST **MAY** BE HERE FOR A LONG, LONG TIME...

EXHAUSTED, REED RICHARDS FALLS **FORWARD** ACROSS A PASSING ASTEROID, AND IN A MOMENT, HE'S LAPPED INTO A WEARY **SLEEP**...

WHILE, A WORLD AWAY-- A WHISPER AWAY-- A SECOND REED RICHARDS PERFORMS A SOMEWHAT SIMPLER ACT:

THE PRESSING OF A BUTTON MARKED "OFF!"

HERE COME THE OTHERS! THEY MUST NOT KNOW I WAS OBSERVING THE NEGATIVE ZONE, OR THEY MIGHT GET SUSPICIOUS.

KLIK!

HEY, LEADER-MAN... IT'S TIME FOR THAT CONFAB YOU CALLED YESTERDAY, REMEMBER?

OH YES-- I'D FORGOTTEN.

MAINLY, BECAUSE IT WAS THIS EARTH'S REED RICHARDS WHO SCHEDULED IT--

--BEFORE I HURLED HIM INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE, AND TOOK HIS PLACE.

NOW THE REST OF THE F.F.-- AND THEIR THREE STRANGE HOUSEGUESTS-- ARE CONVINCED IT IS THE EVIL REED RICHARDS OF COUNTEREARTH WHO IS IMPRISONED THERE.

AND I MUST MAKE CERTAIN THEY CONTINUE THINKING THUS-- TILL I AM READY TO ACT.

YES, THAT'S RIGHT, PARADOX-LOVER...

THIS REED RICHARDS COMES FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN-- AND HAS PERSUADED HIS FELLOW SUPER-HEROES HE HAS LOST HIS STRETCHING POWERS-- AS OUR REED DID, AS WELL.

AND, IF YOU CAN EXPLAIN THAT WHOLE MAGILLA IN FEWER THAN 29 WORDS, CONSIDER YOURSELF NO-PRIZED.

I'M WORRIED, IMPOSSIBLE MAN. REED SEEMS SO DISTRACTED EVER SINCE OUR CLIMACTIC BATTLE WITH THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR.*

LIKE ANY MERE HUMAN, DEAR LADY, HE PROBABLY JUST FEELS INFERIOR BECAUSE HE'S LOST HIS ONE SUPER-POWER.

BUT, WHY DON'T YOU JUST CALL ME IMPY, LIKE THE OTHERS DO?

Y'KNOW, TIGRA, FOR A WERE-WOMAN, YOU'RE ONE FOXY LADY.

WHAT SAY WE GO WATCH THE SUBMARINE RACES IN THE FANTASTICAR?

I'D LOVE TO, JOHNNY-- BUT I'M AFRAID I'M A COUPLE OF YEARS TOO OLD FOR YOU.

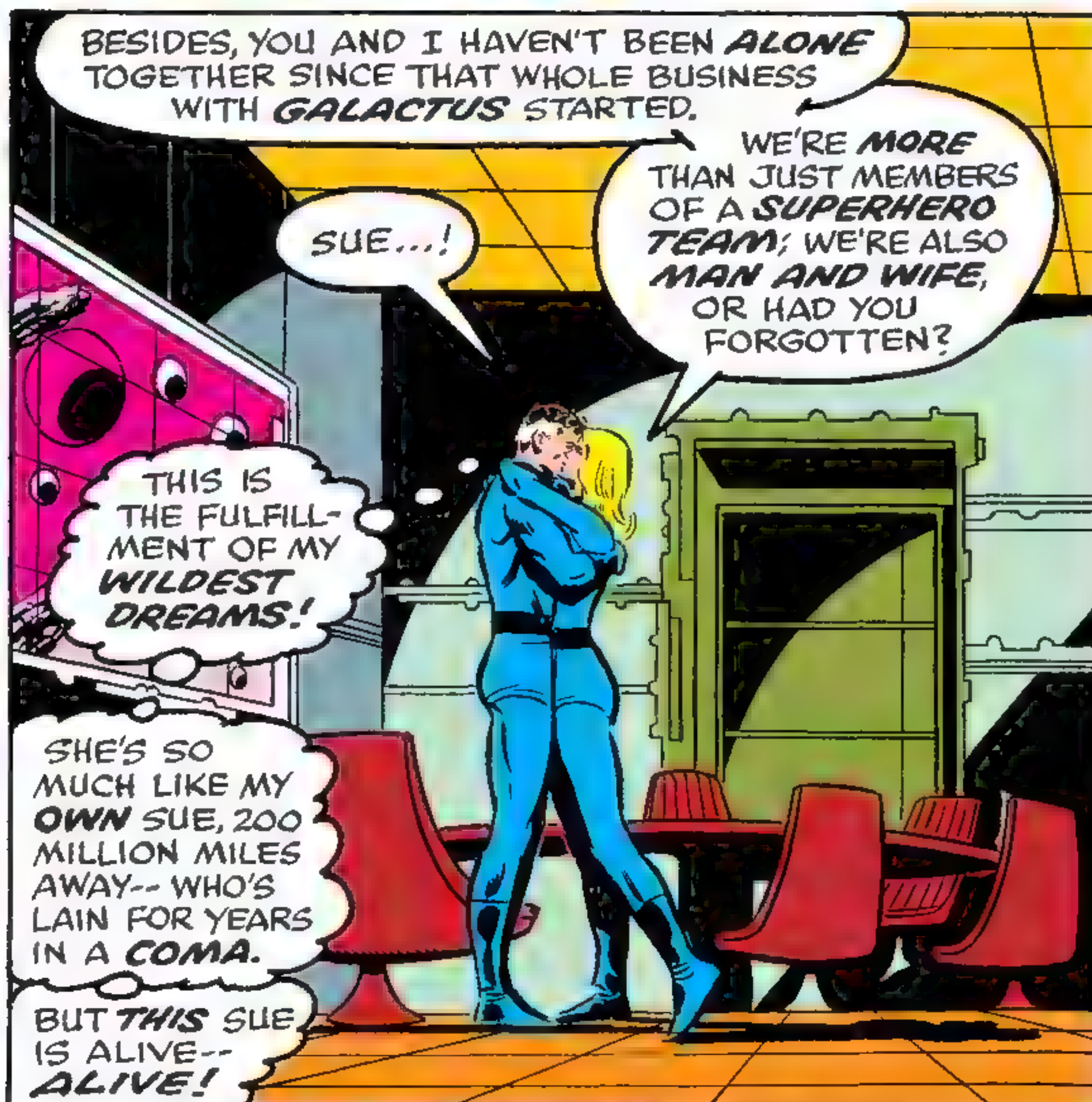
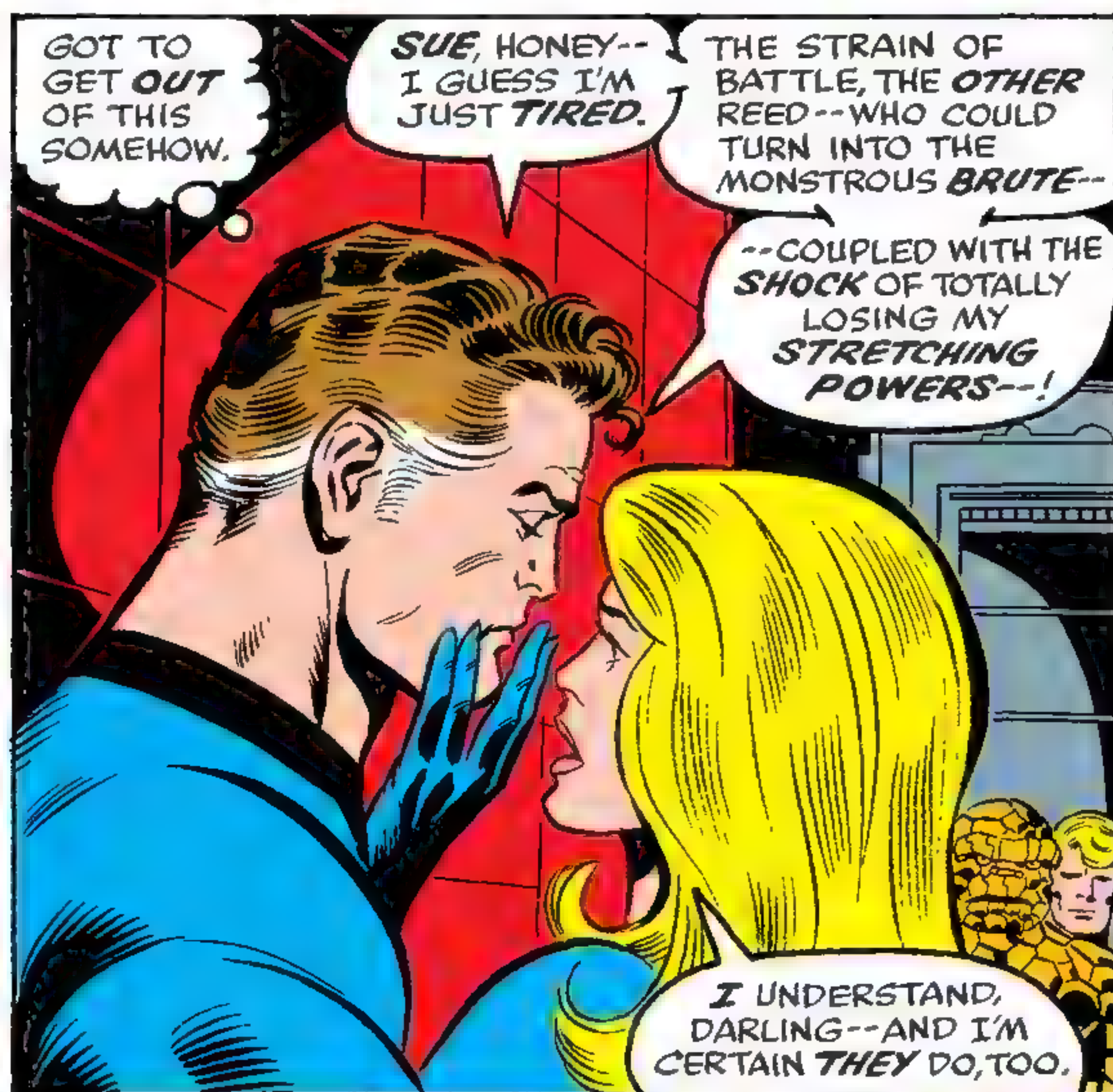
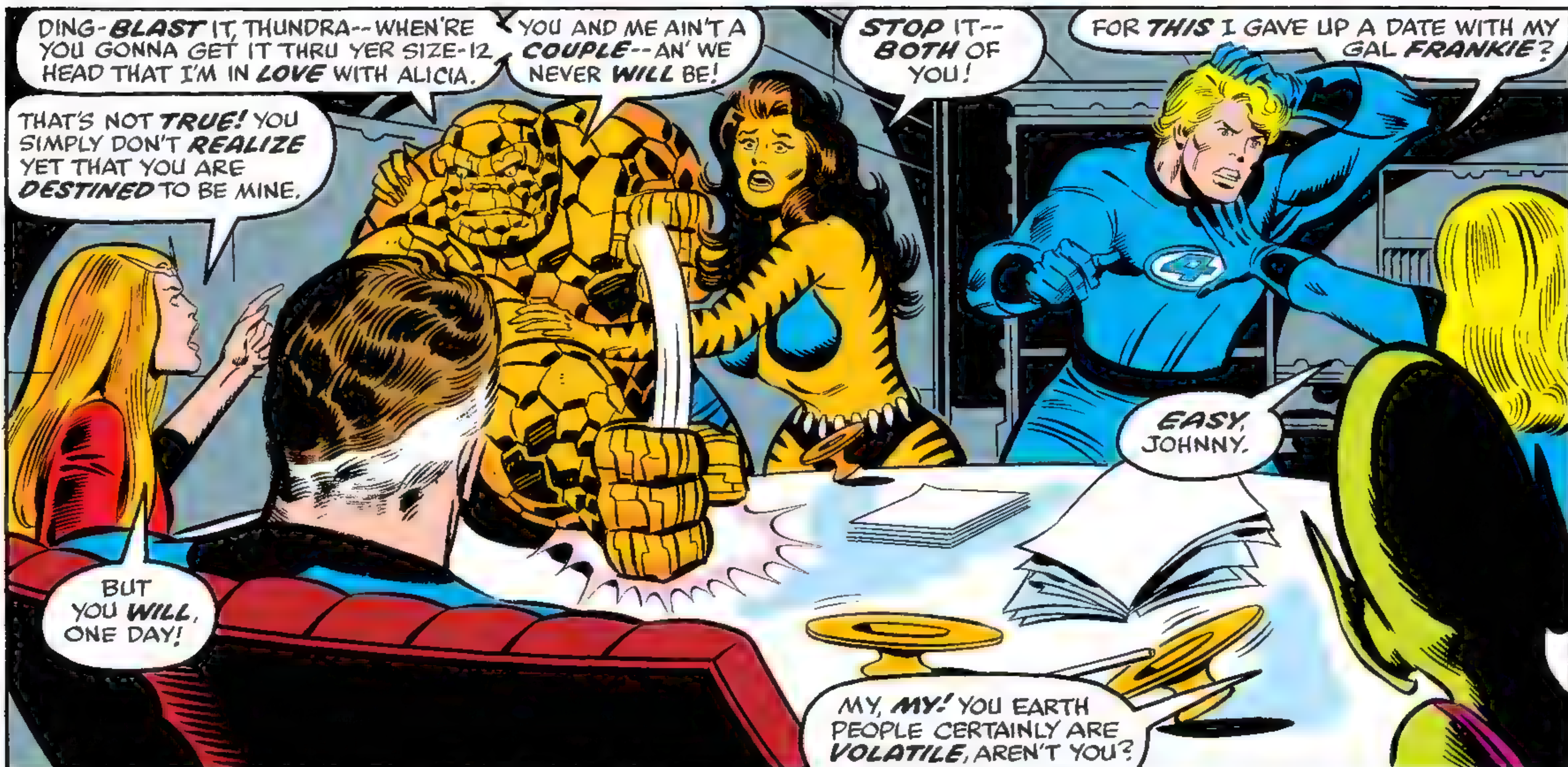
MAYBE IF YOU BROUGHT A NOTE FROM YOUR BIG SIS...!

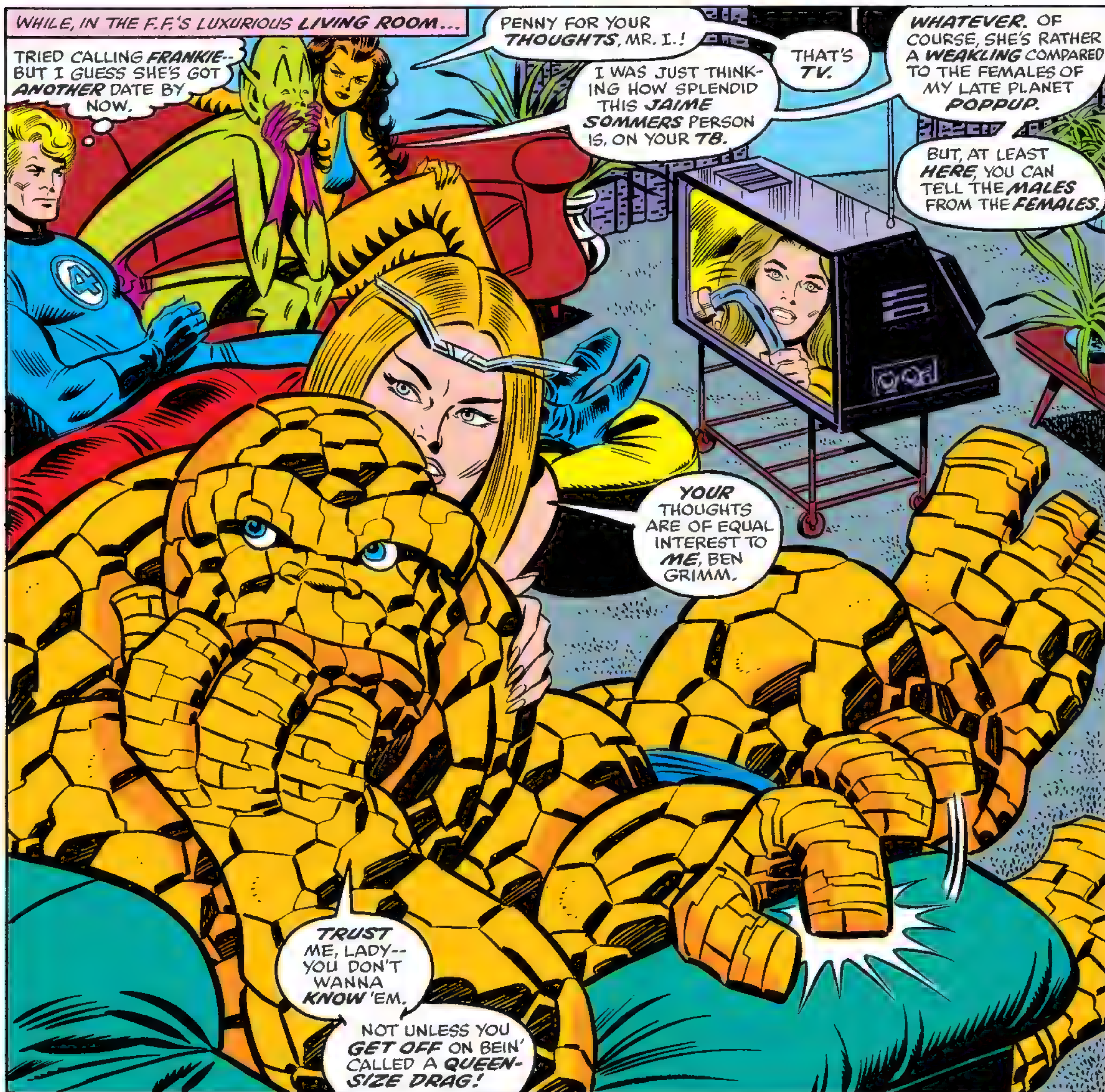
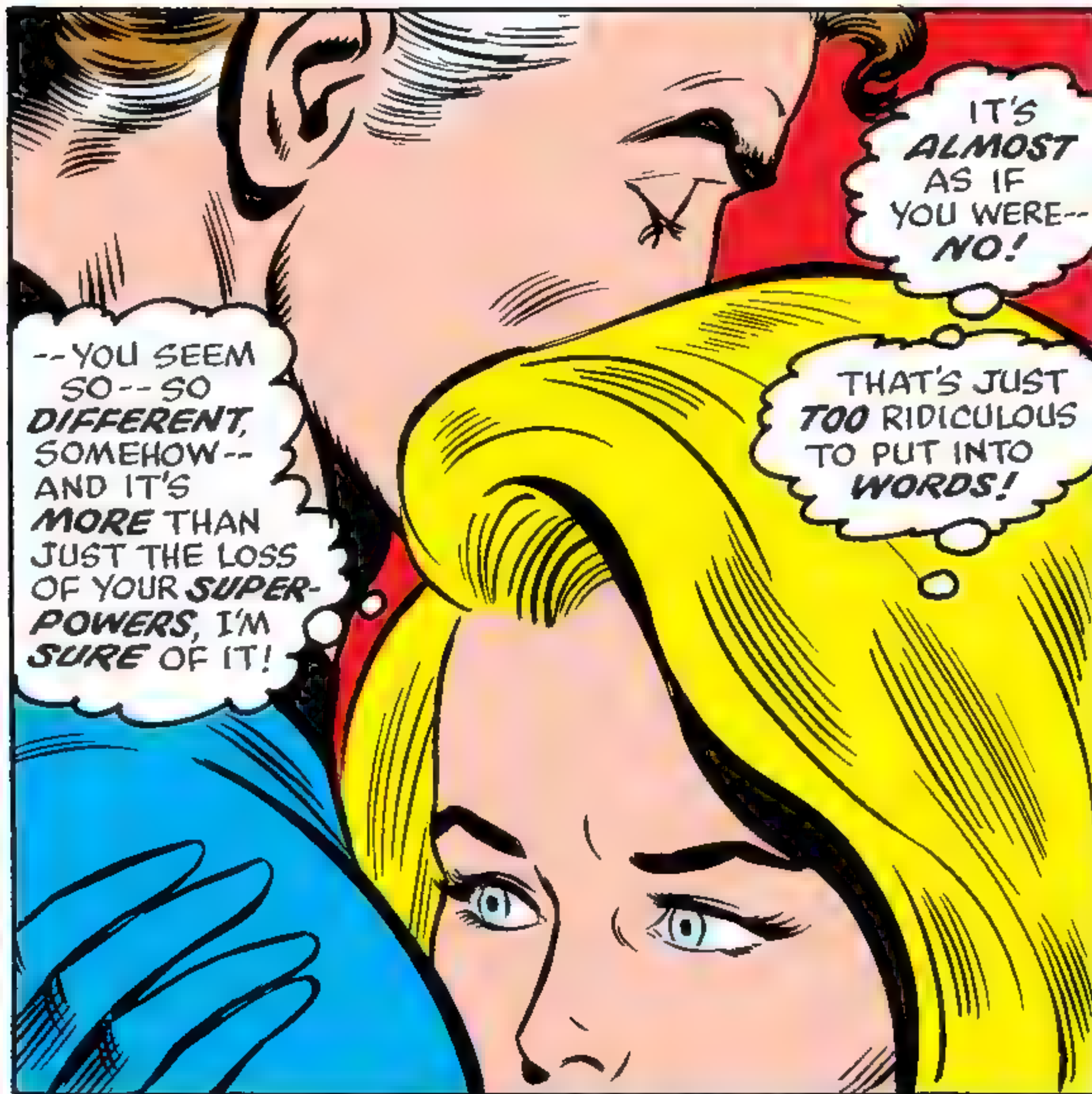
I JUST WANNA GET THIS POW-WOW OVER WITH, SO'S I CAN SPLIT AND LOOK UP MY GAL, ALICIA.

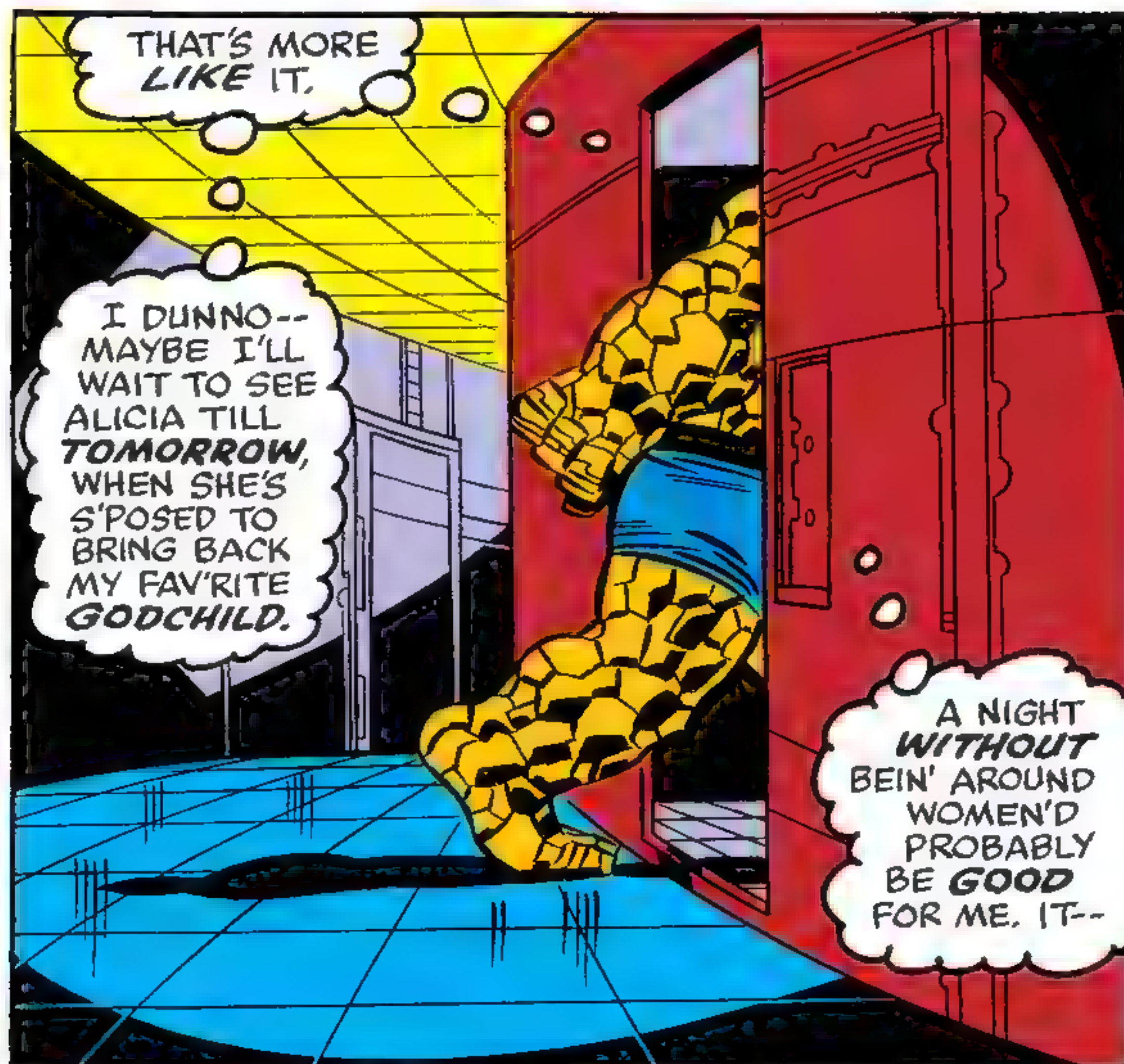
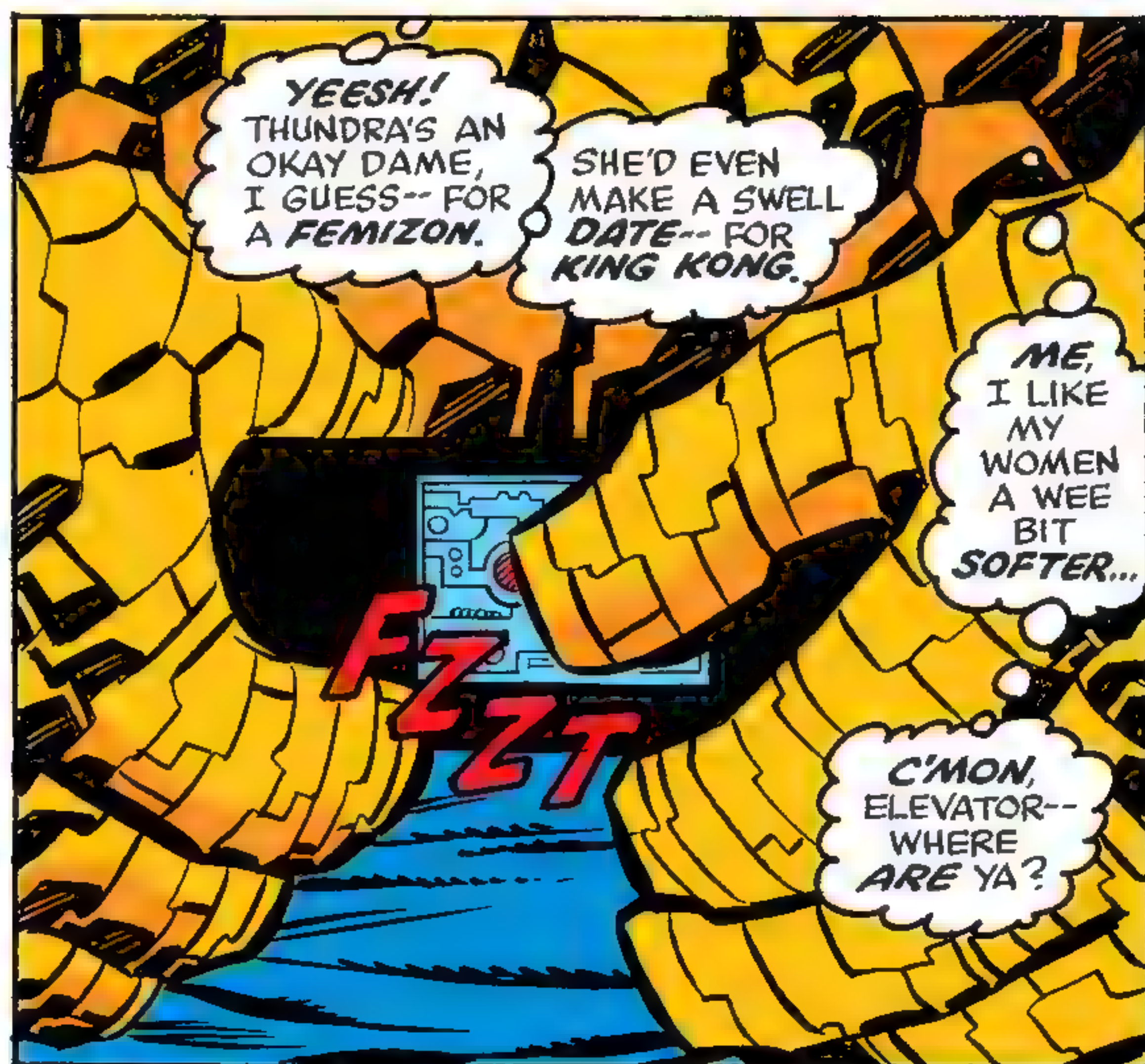
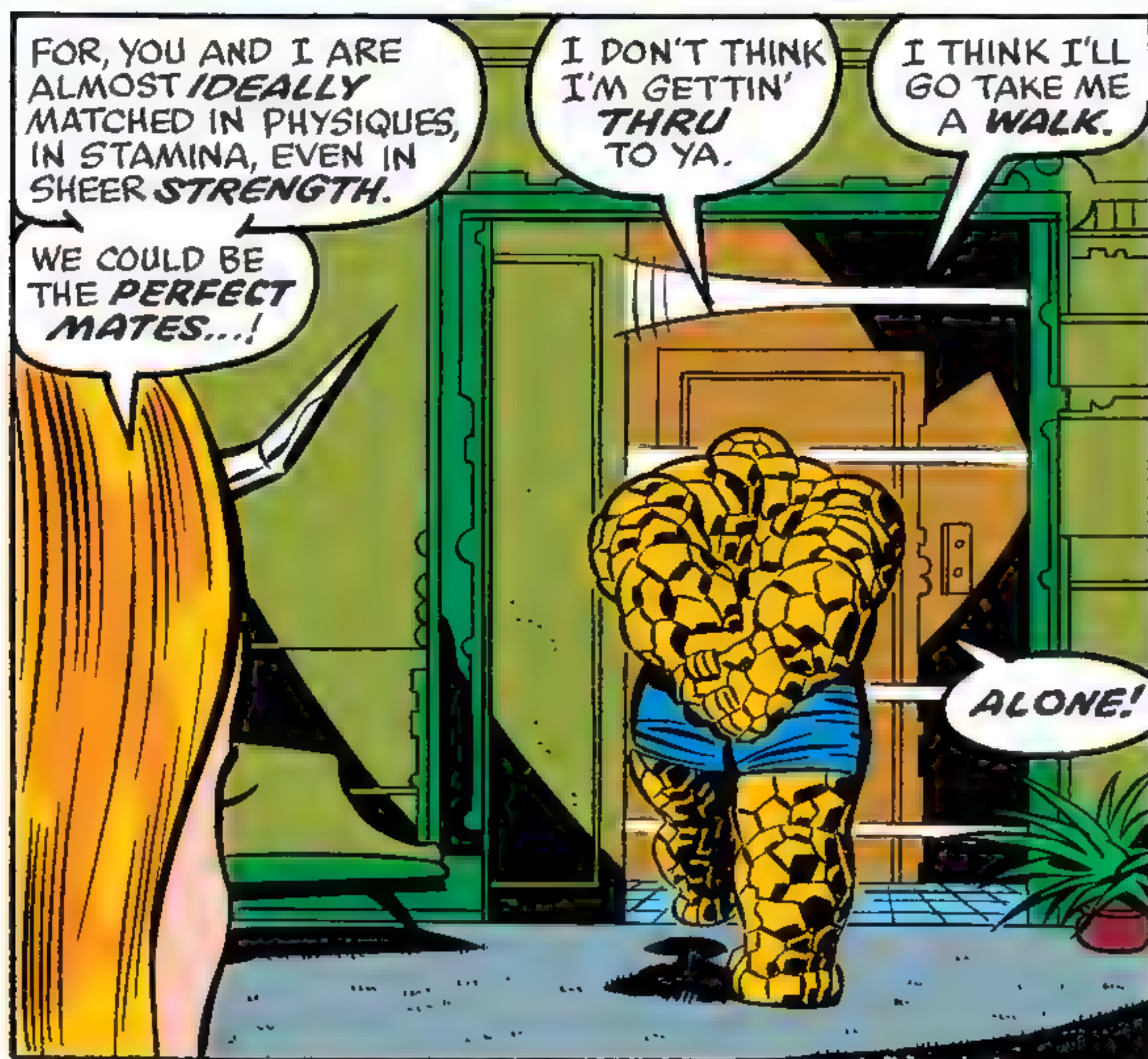
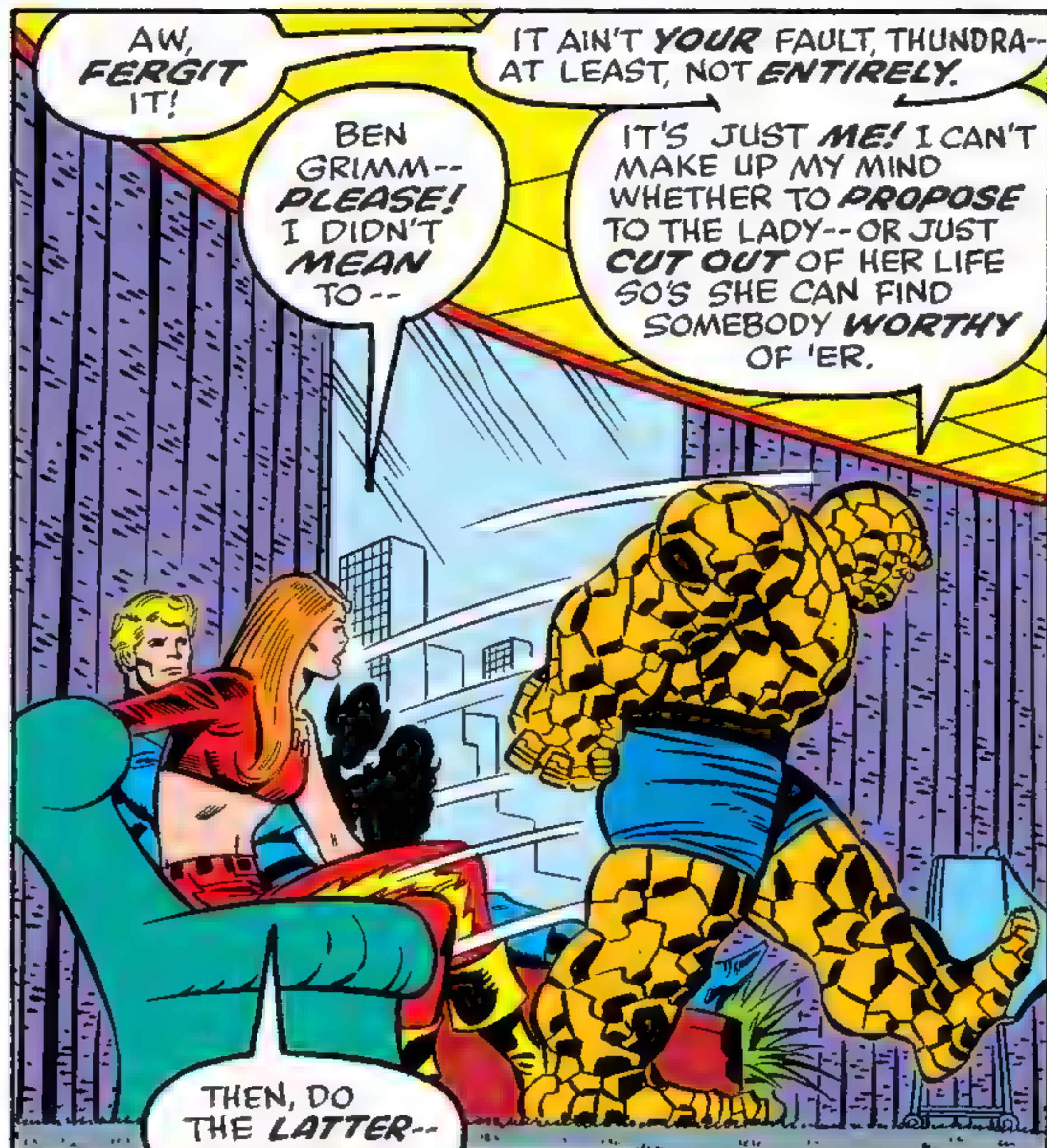
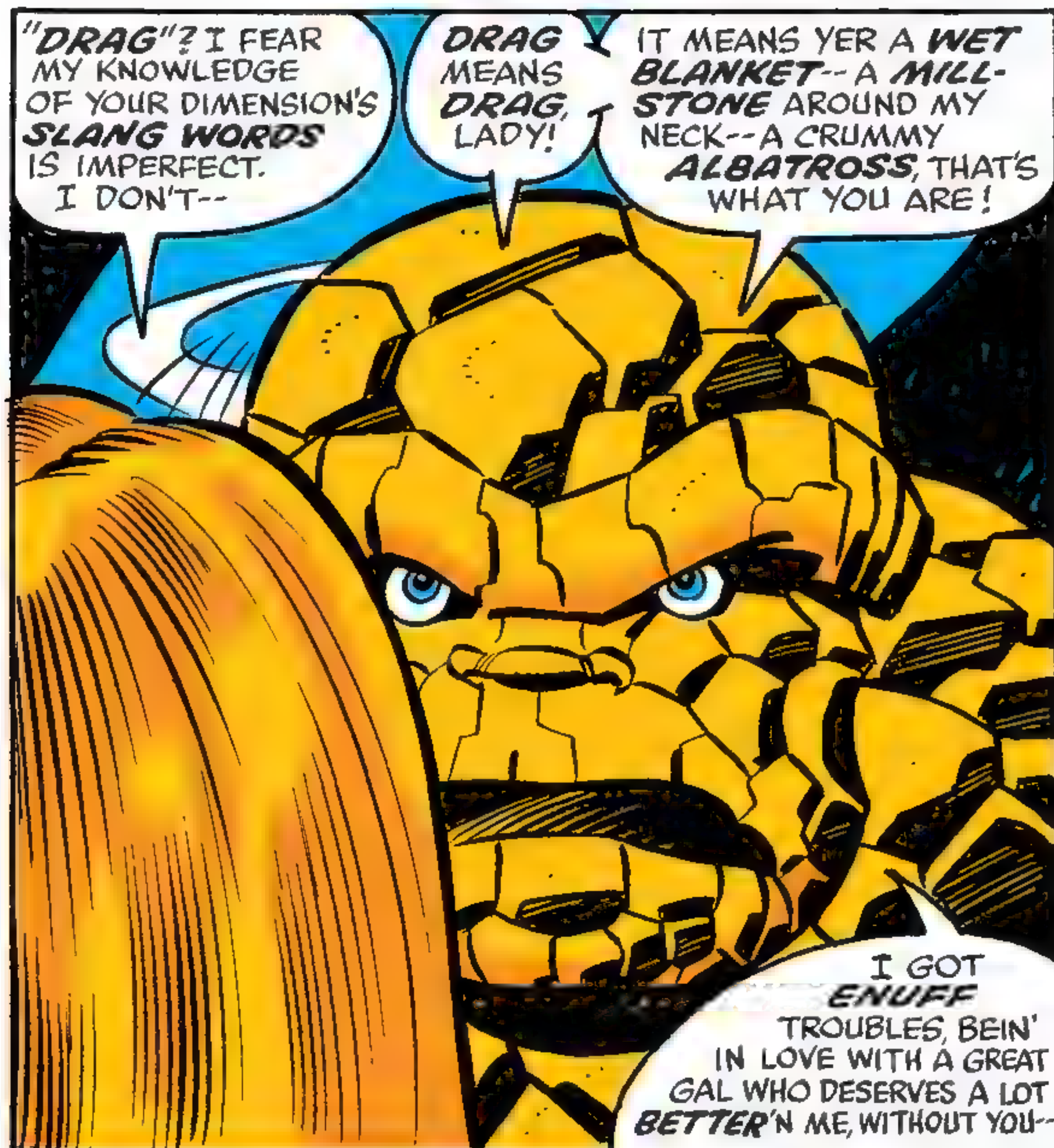
SHE AN' LITTLE FRANKLIN ARE OVER AT HER PAD.

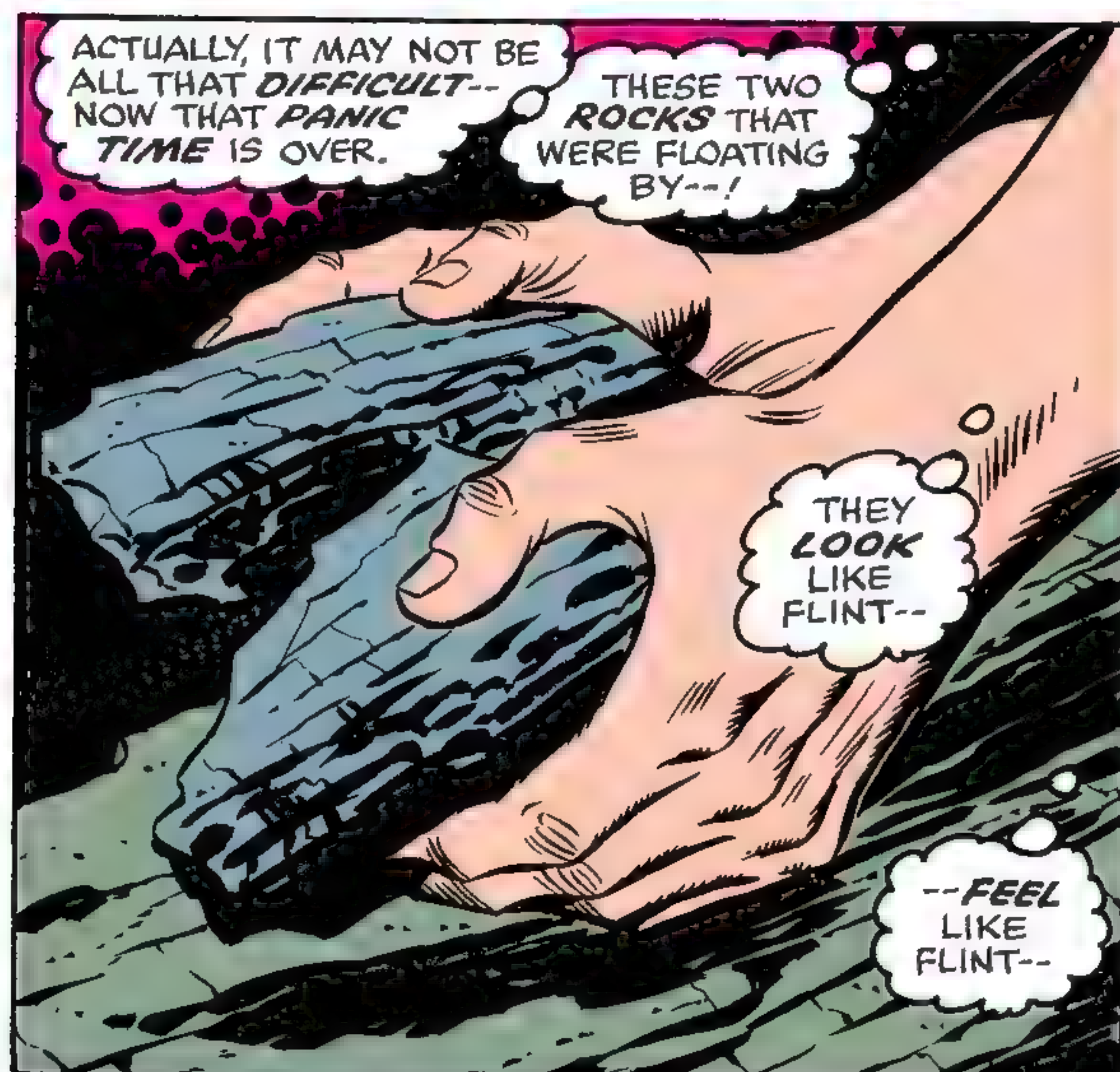
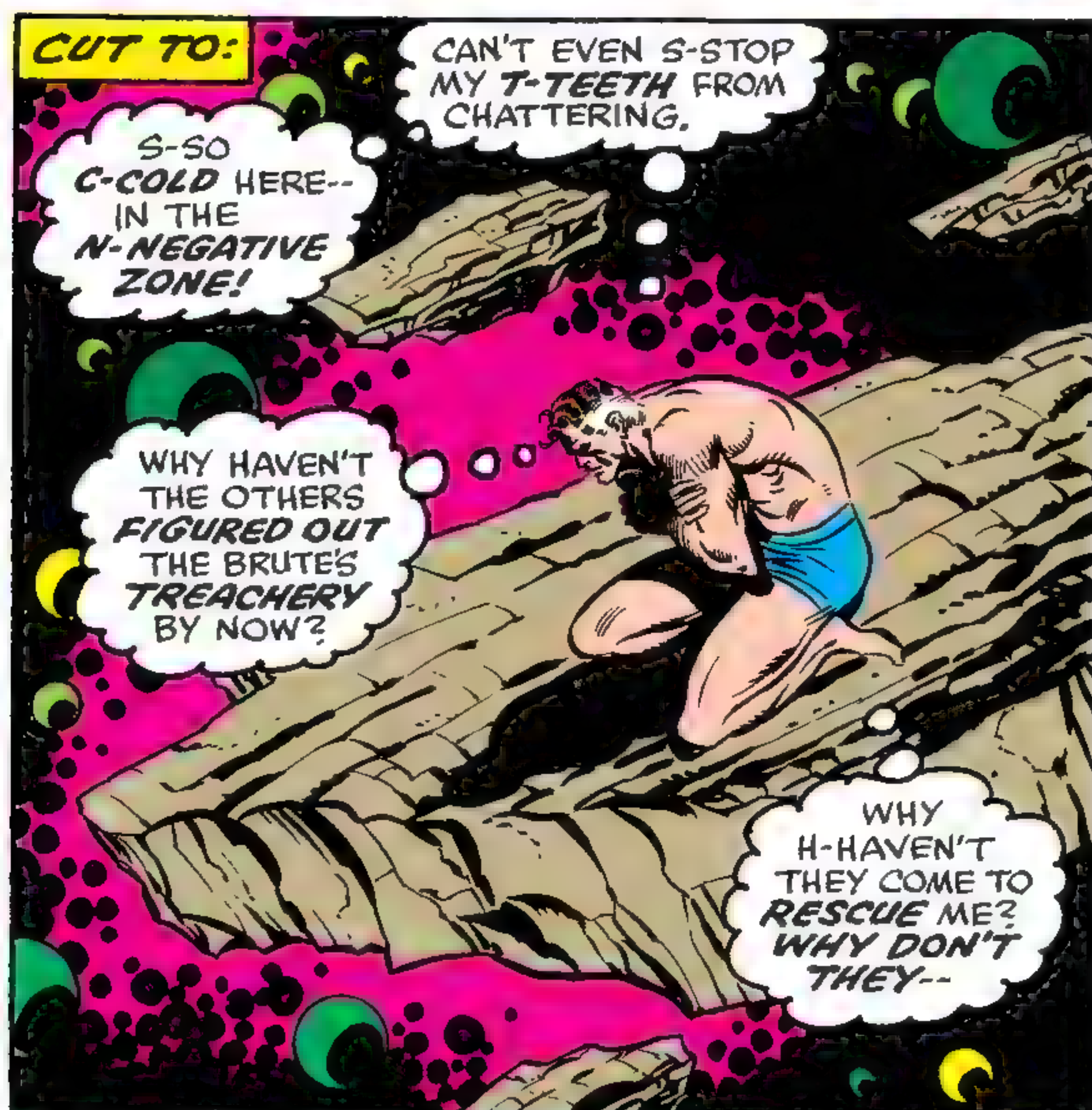
ALICIA IS NICE, I SUPPOSE-- BUT WHY DO YOU SHOW MORE INTEREST IN HER THAN IN ONE WHO IS TRULY YOUR EQUAL-- SUCH AS MYSELF?

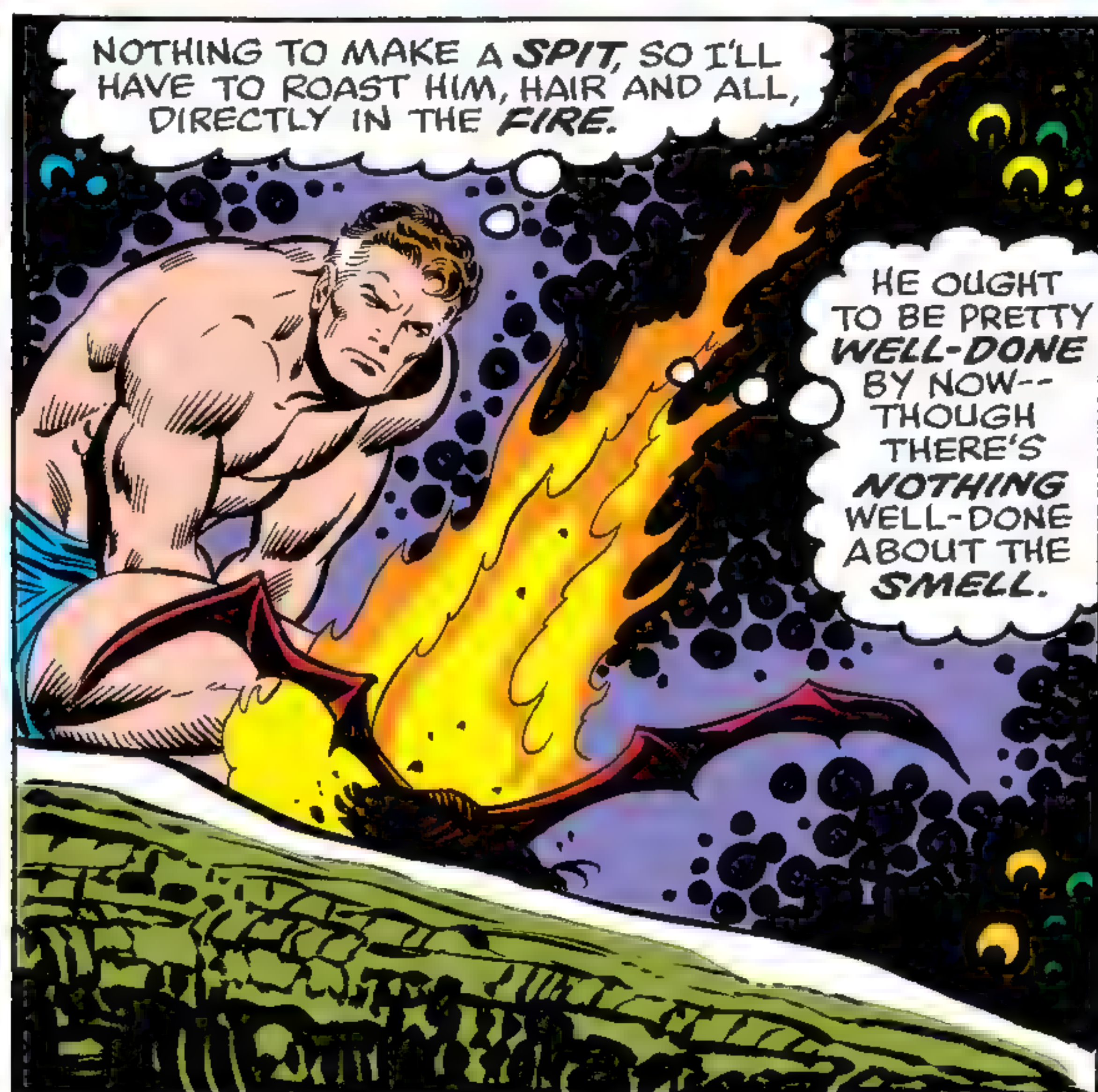
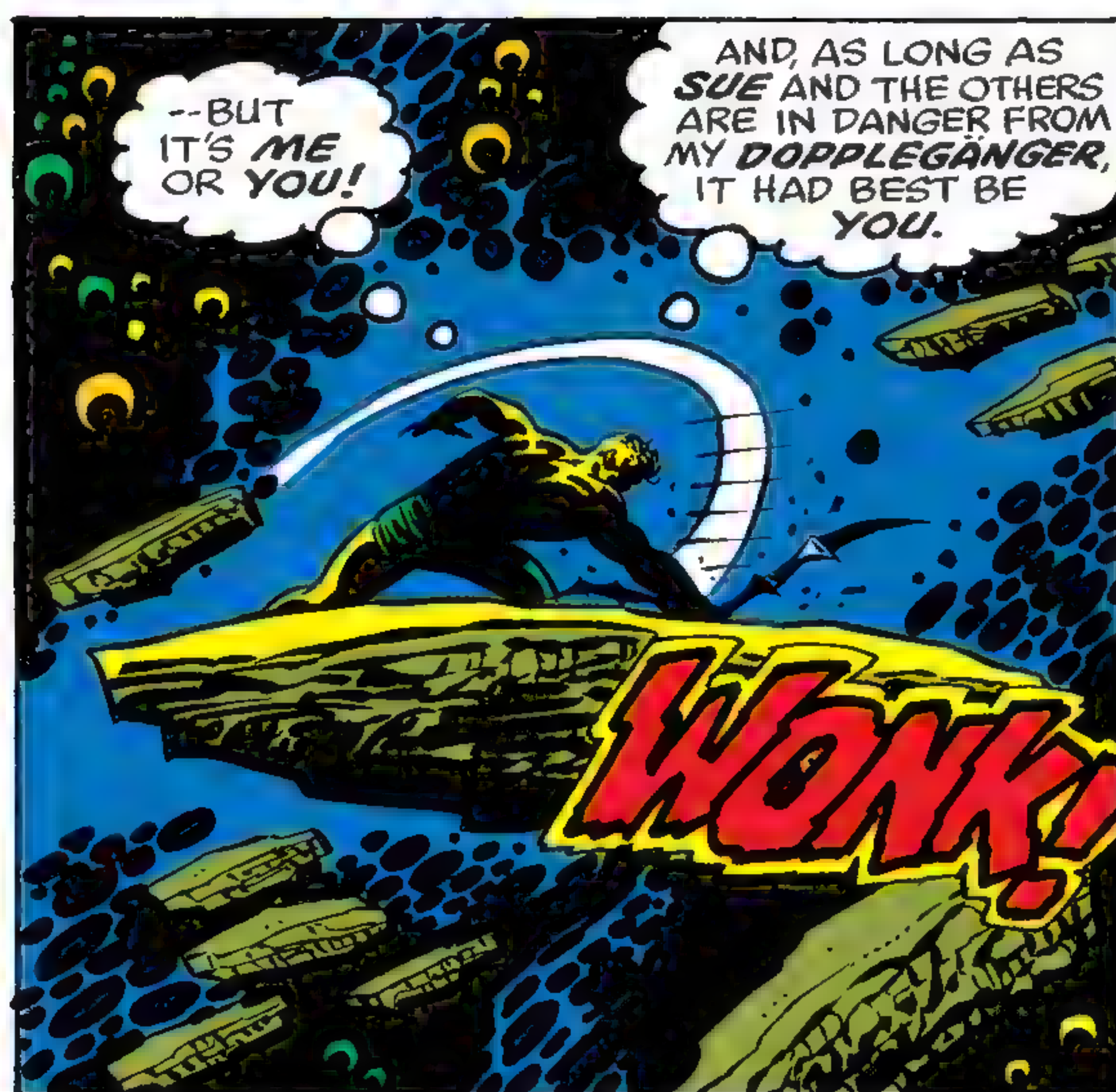
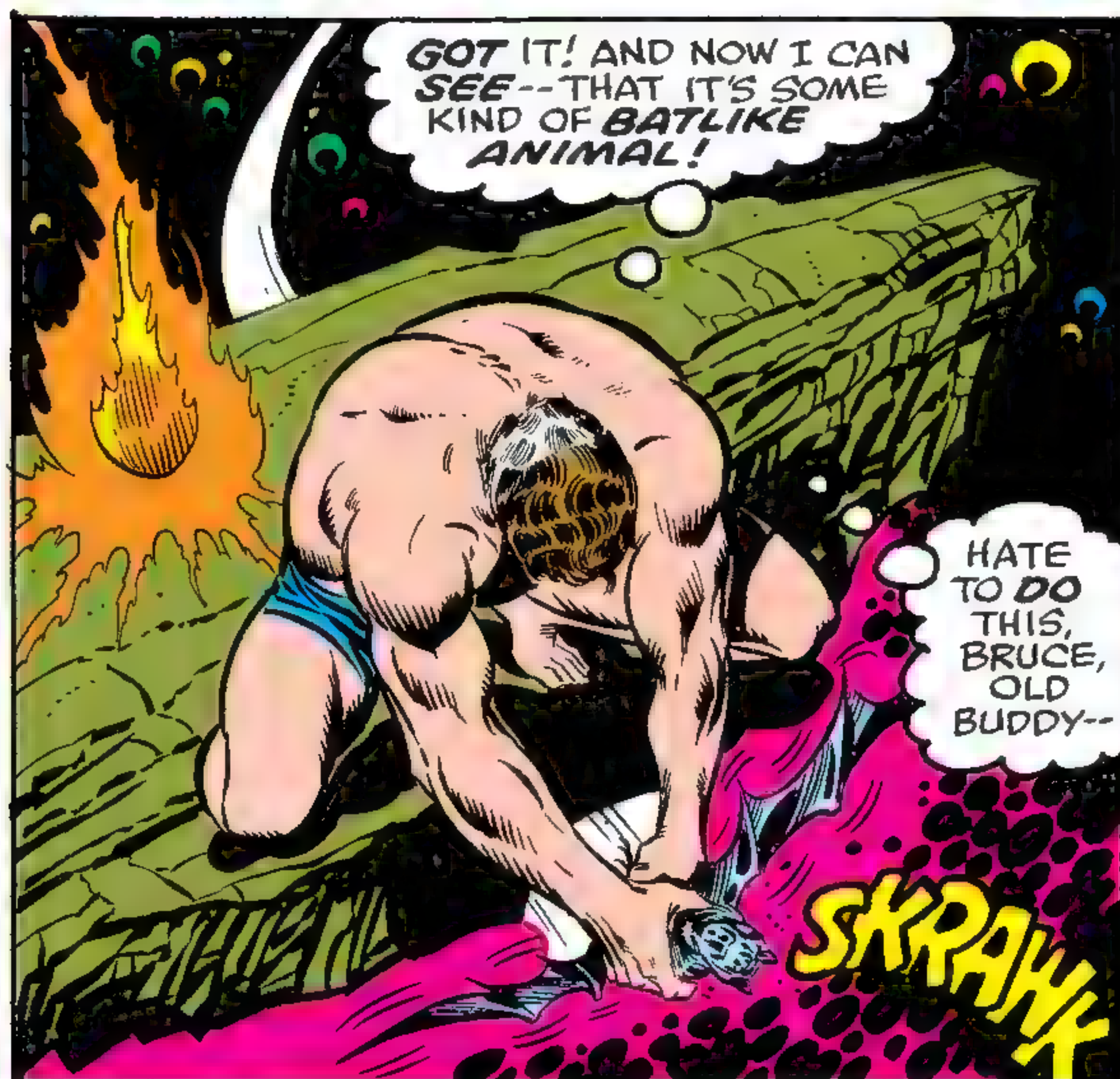
*LAST ISSUE,--ROY.

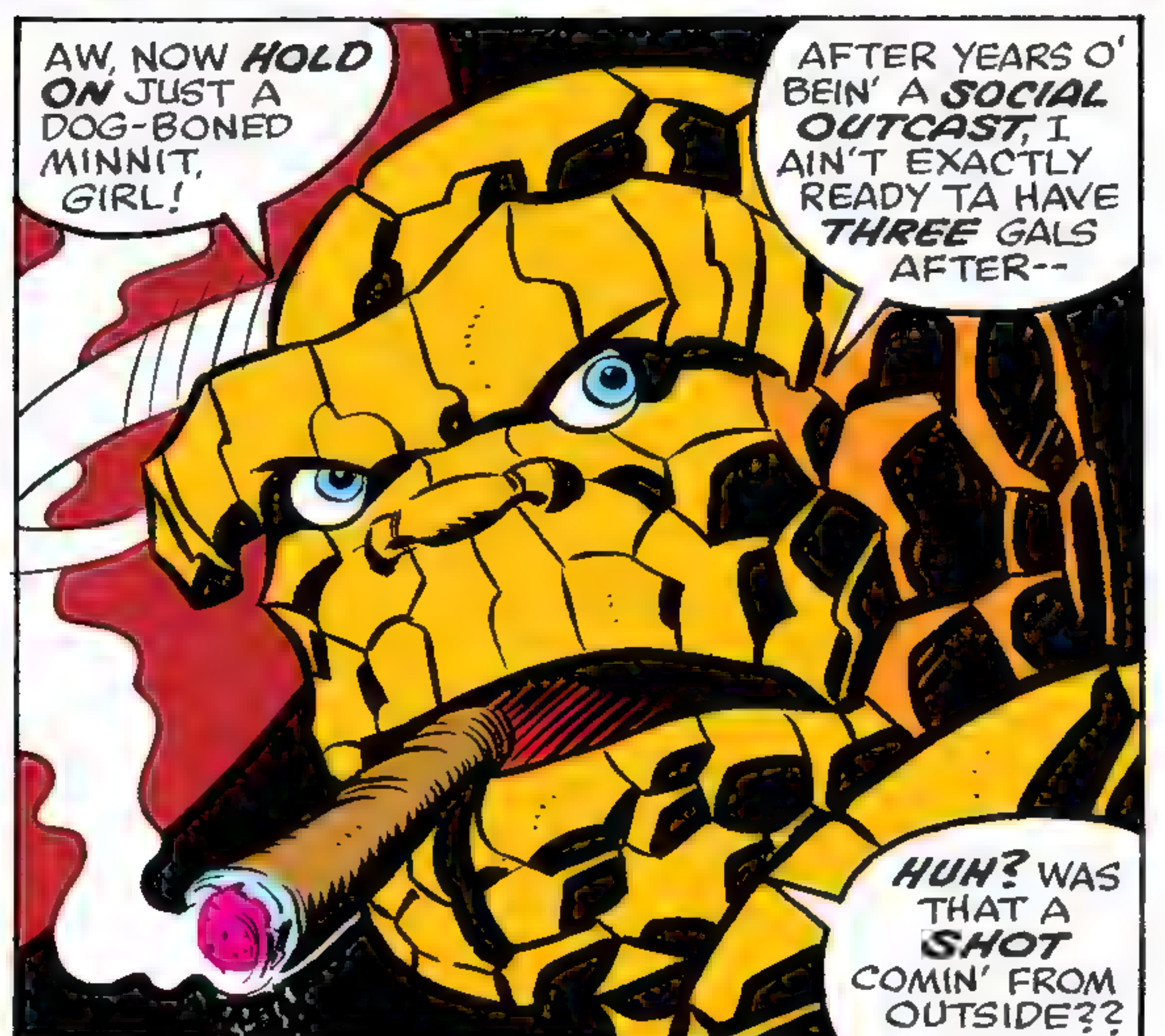
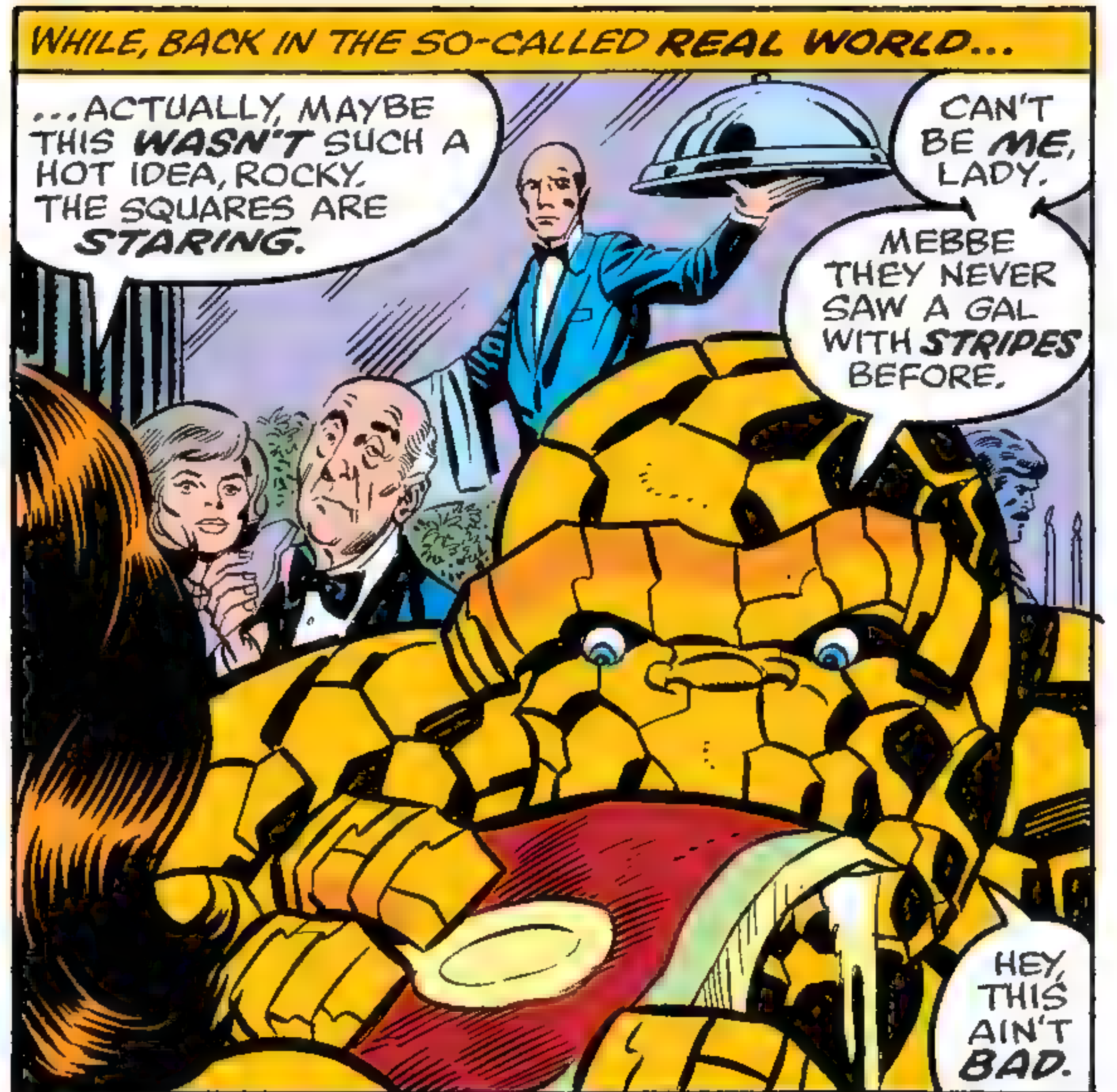












IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT THESE BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW INEFFECTUAL IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK. LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT THESE BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW INEFFECTUAL IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK. LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT **THESE** BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW **INEFFECTUAL** IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT **THESE** BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW **INEFFECTUAL** IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT **THESE** BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW **INEFFECTUAL** IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT **THESE** BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW **INEFFECTUAL** IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT THESE BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW INEFFECTUAL IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT THESE BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW INEFFECTUAL IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

FLAME HO

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

IT CERTAINLY WAS, B.G.! BUT THEN, IF YOU WERE A POLICEMAN OR A BANK GUARD, AND SUDDENLY BEHELD WHAT THESE BELEAGUERED STALWARTS SAW--

--WOULDN'T YOU TRY GUNFIRE TOO, NO MATTER HOW INEFFECTUAL IT MIGHT BE?

HOLY JUMPIN' CATS!

'SCUZE THE EXPRESSION, TIGRA.

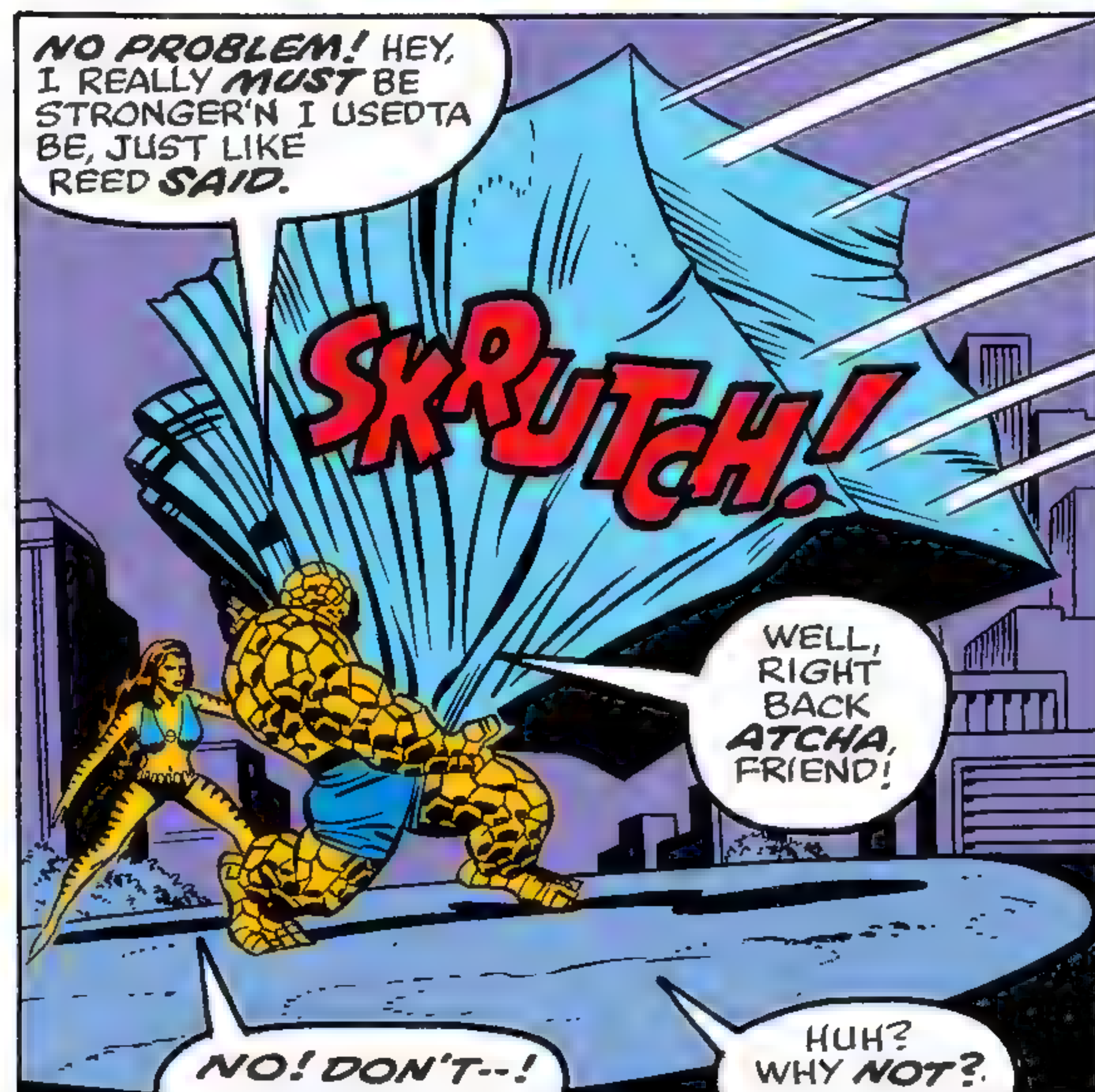
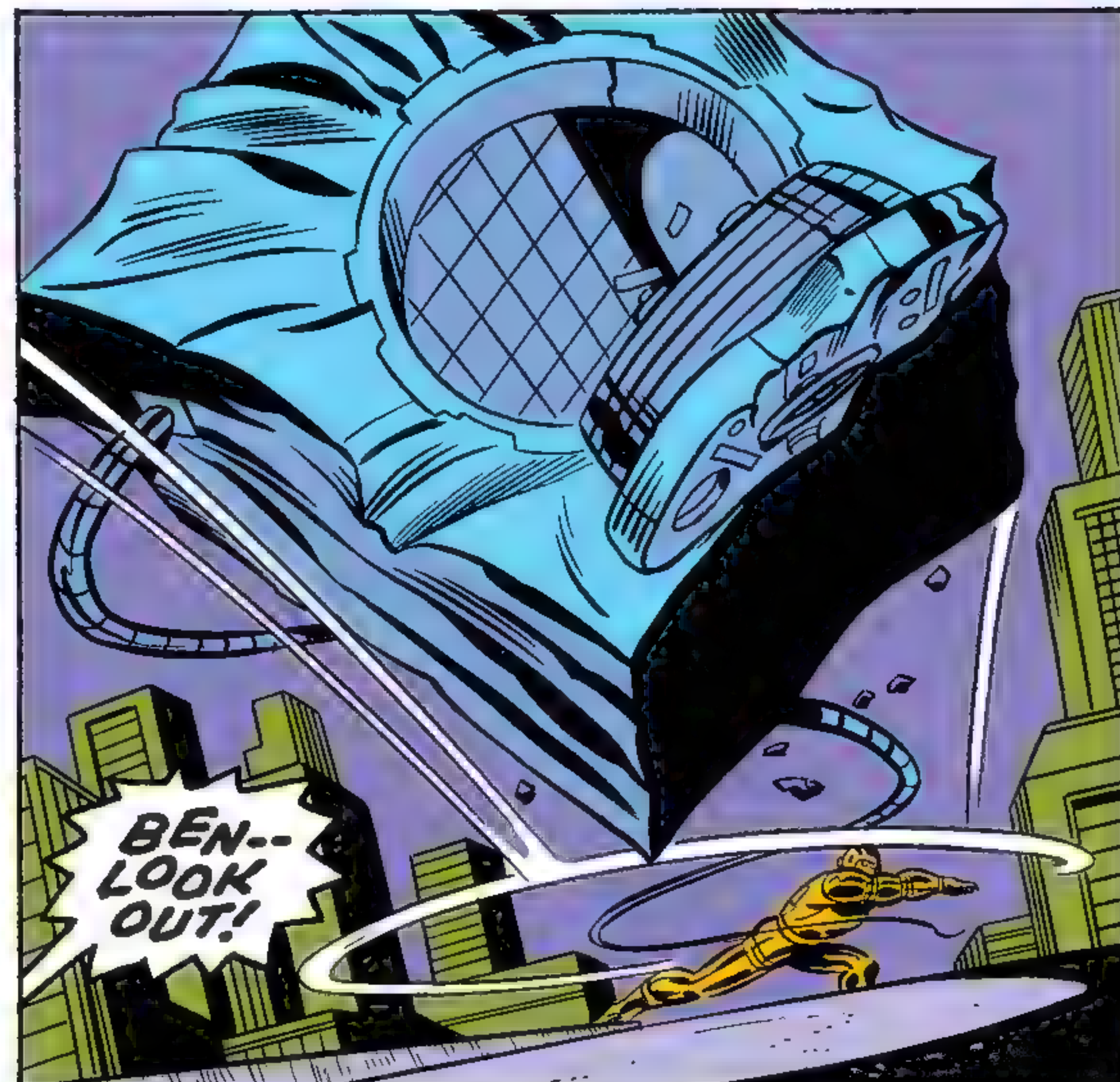
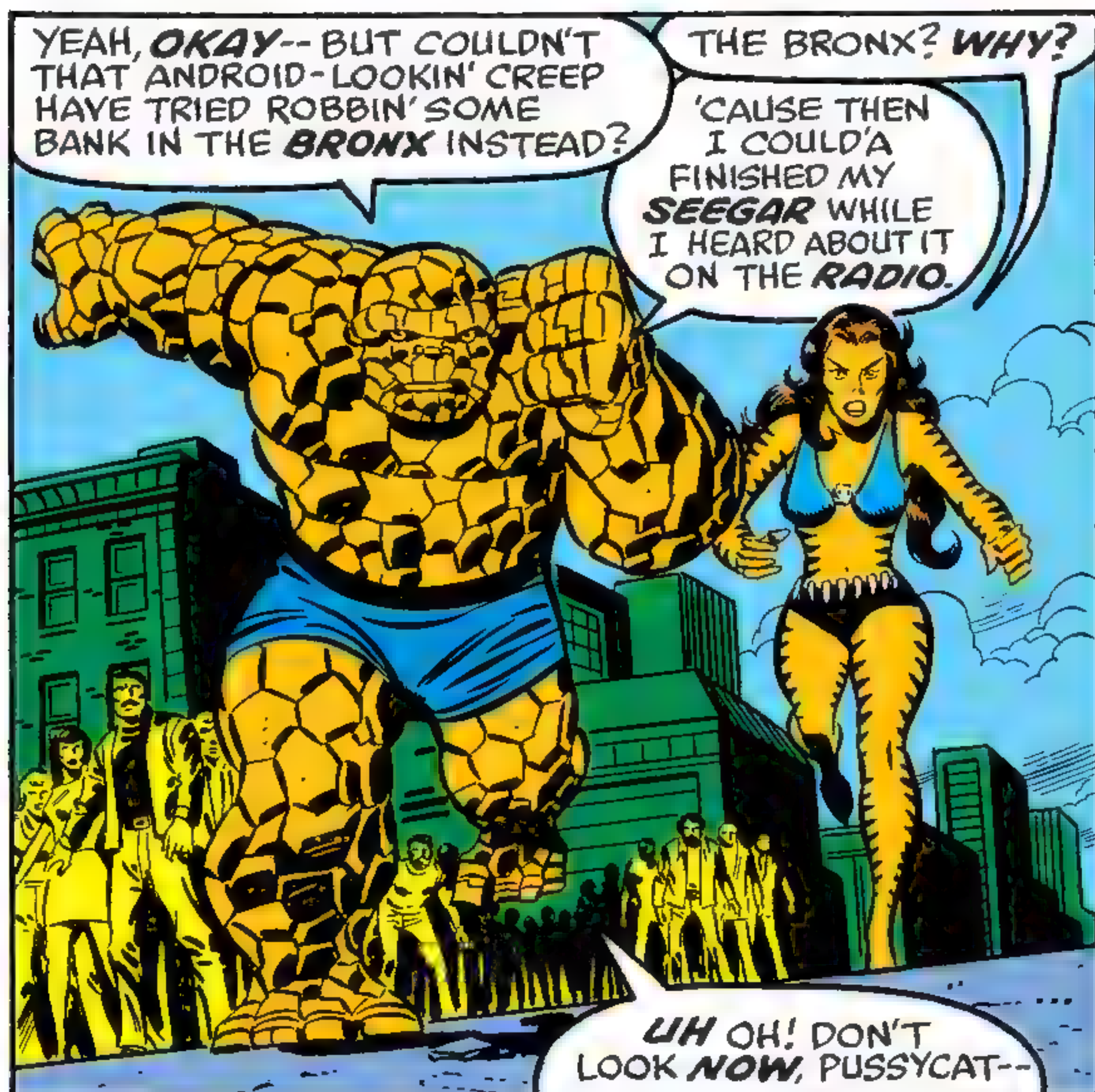
FLAME HO

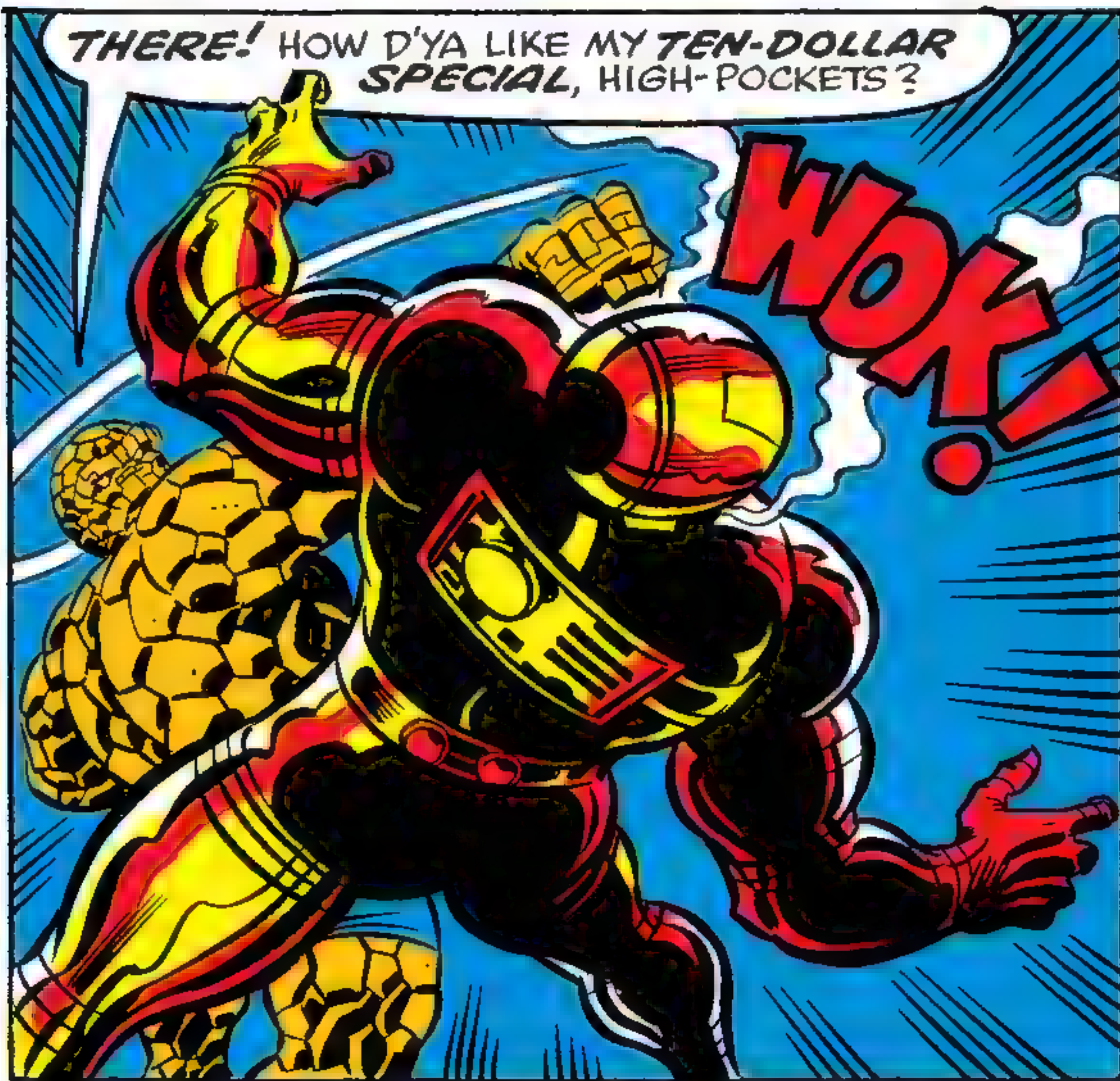
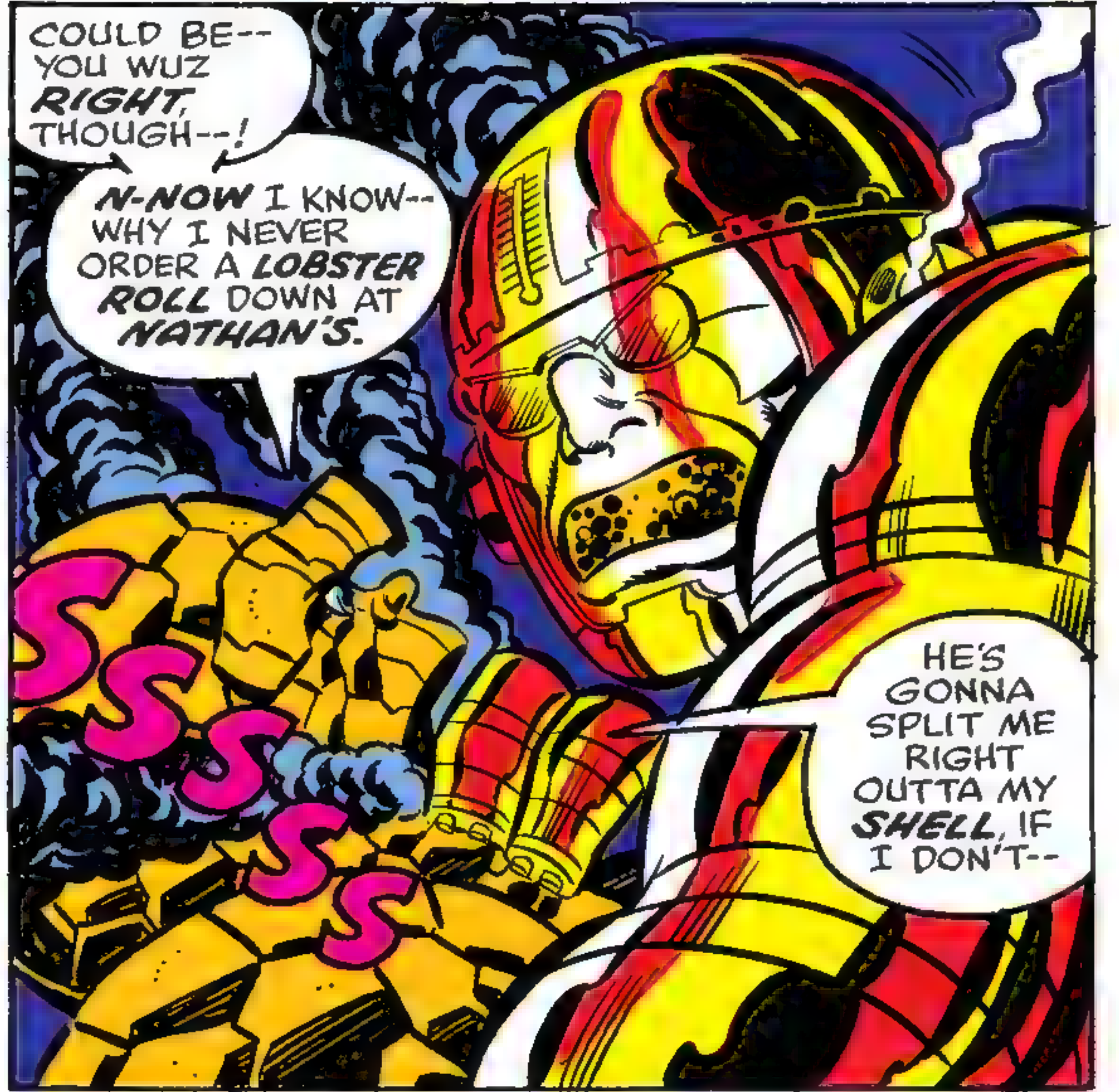
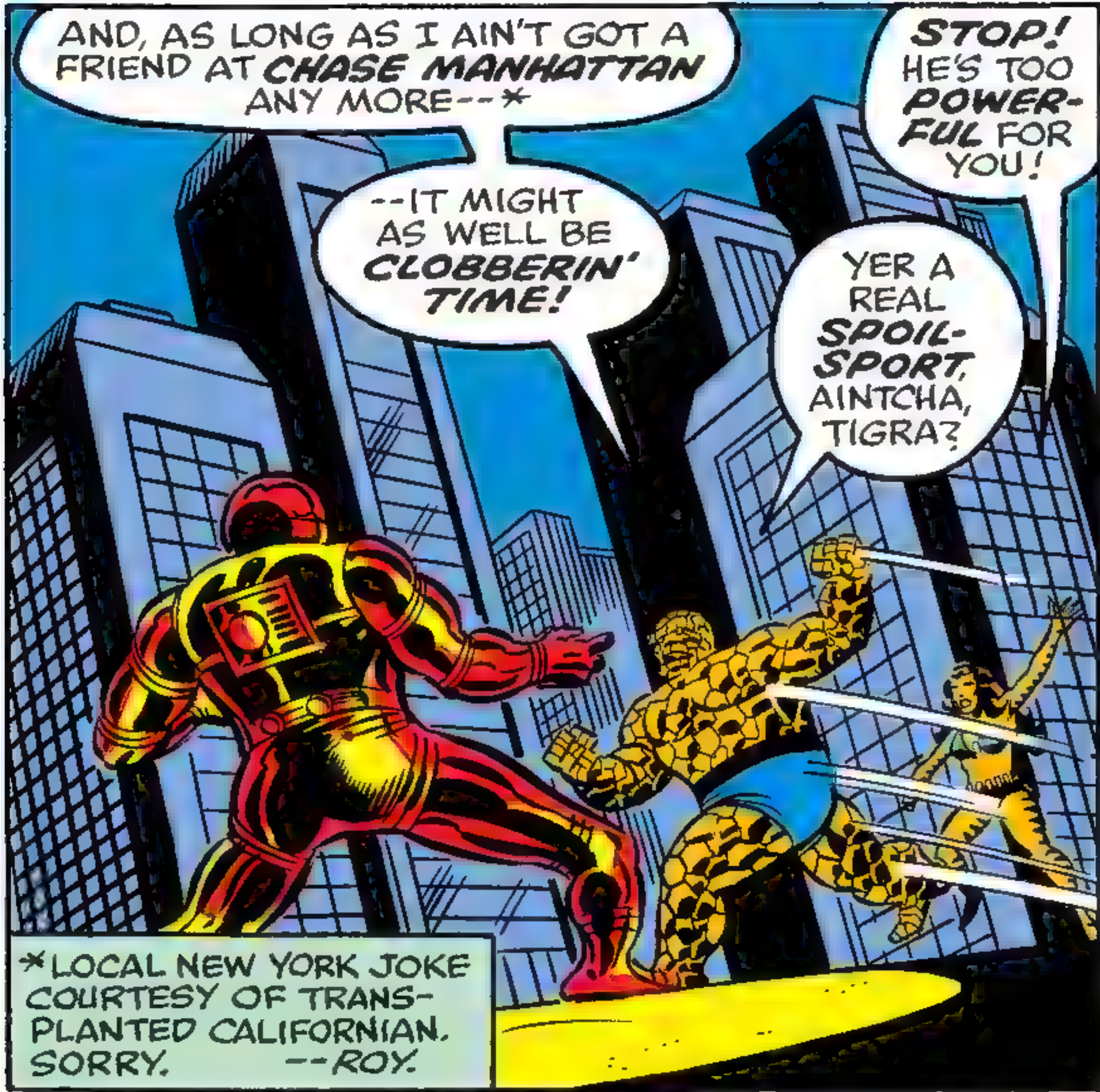
BLAM! BLAM!

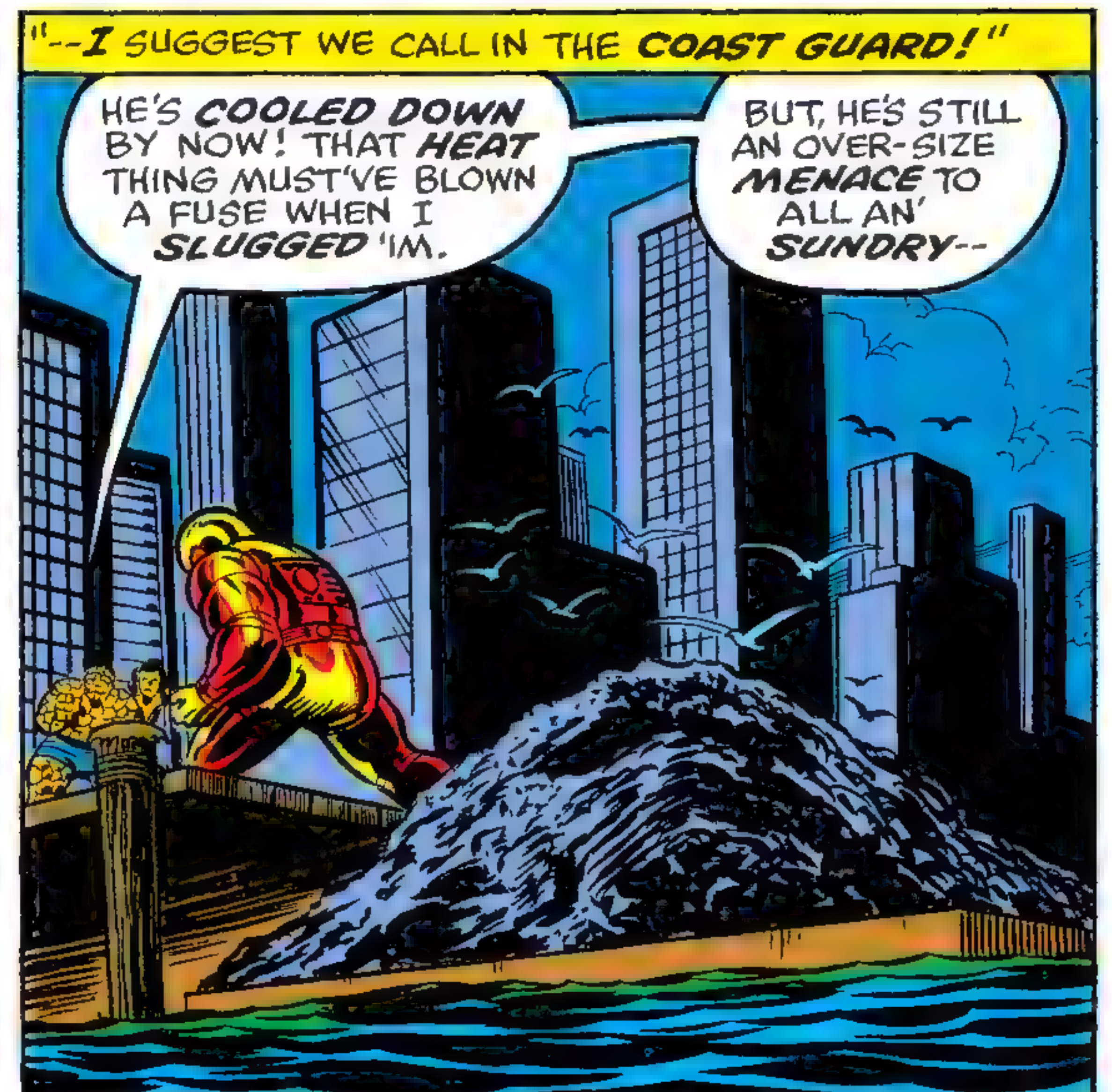
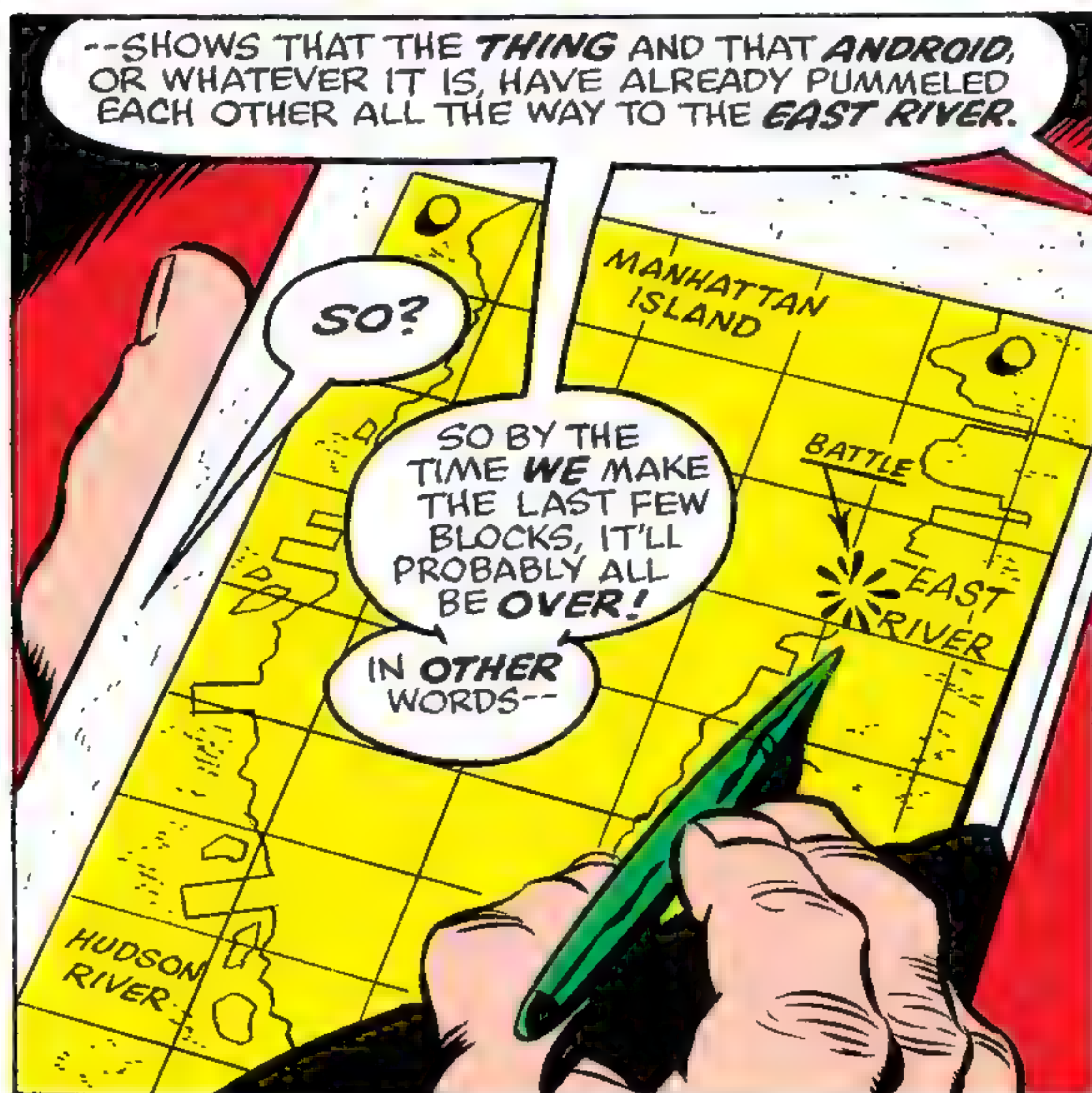
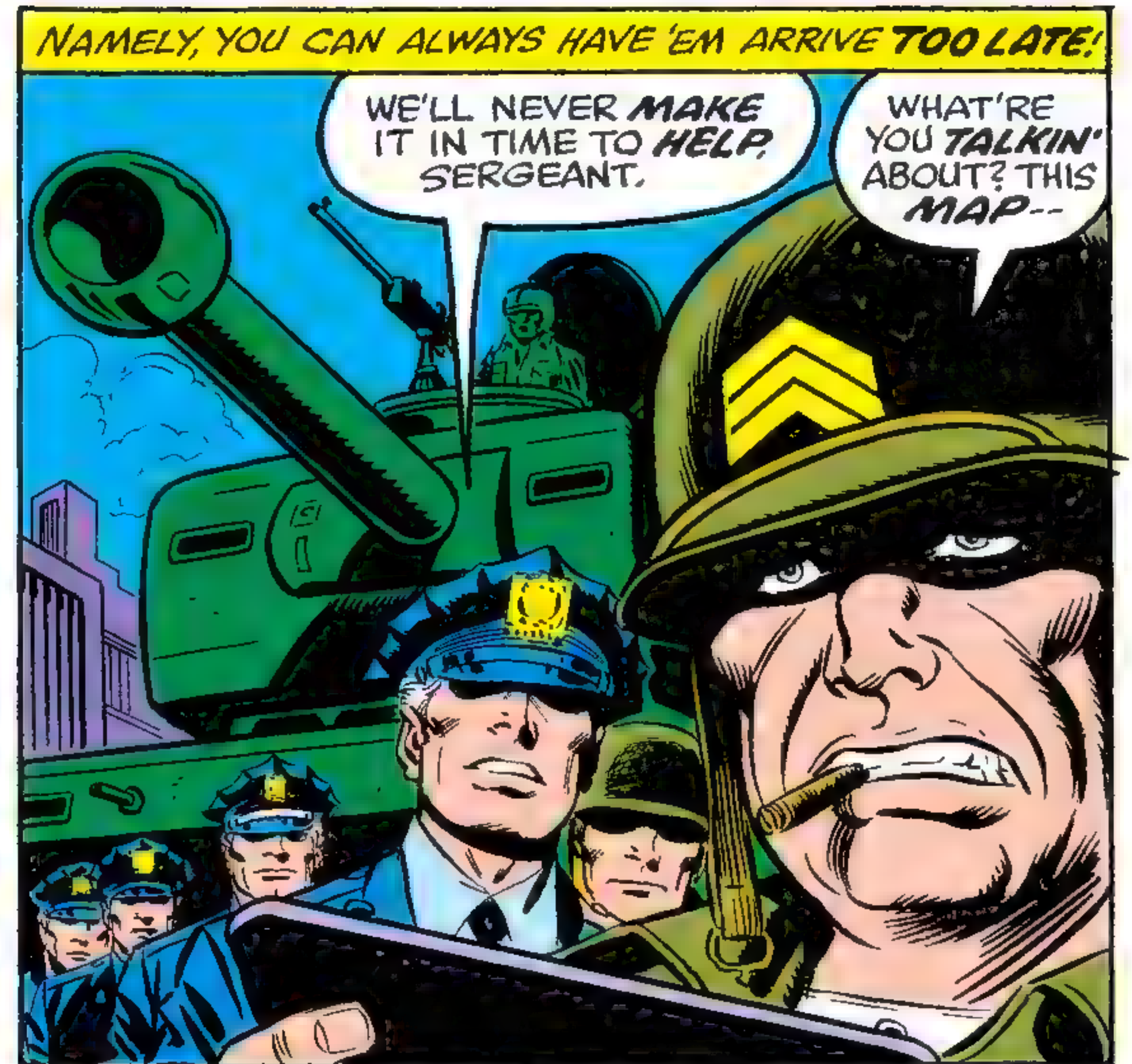
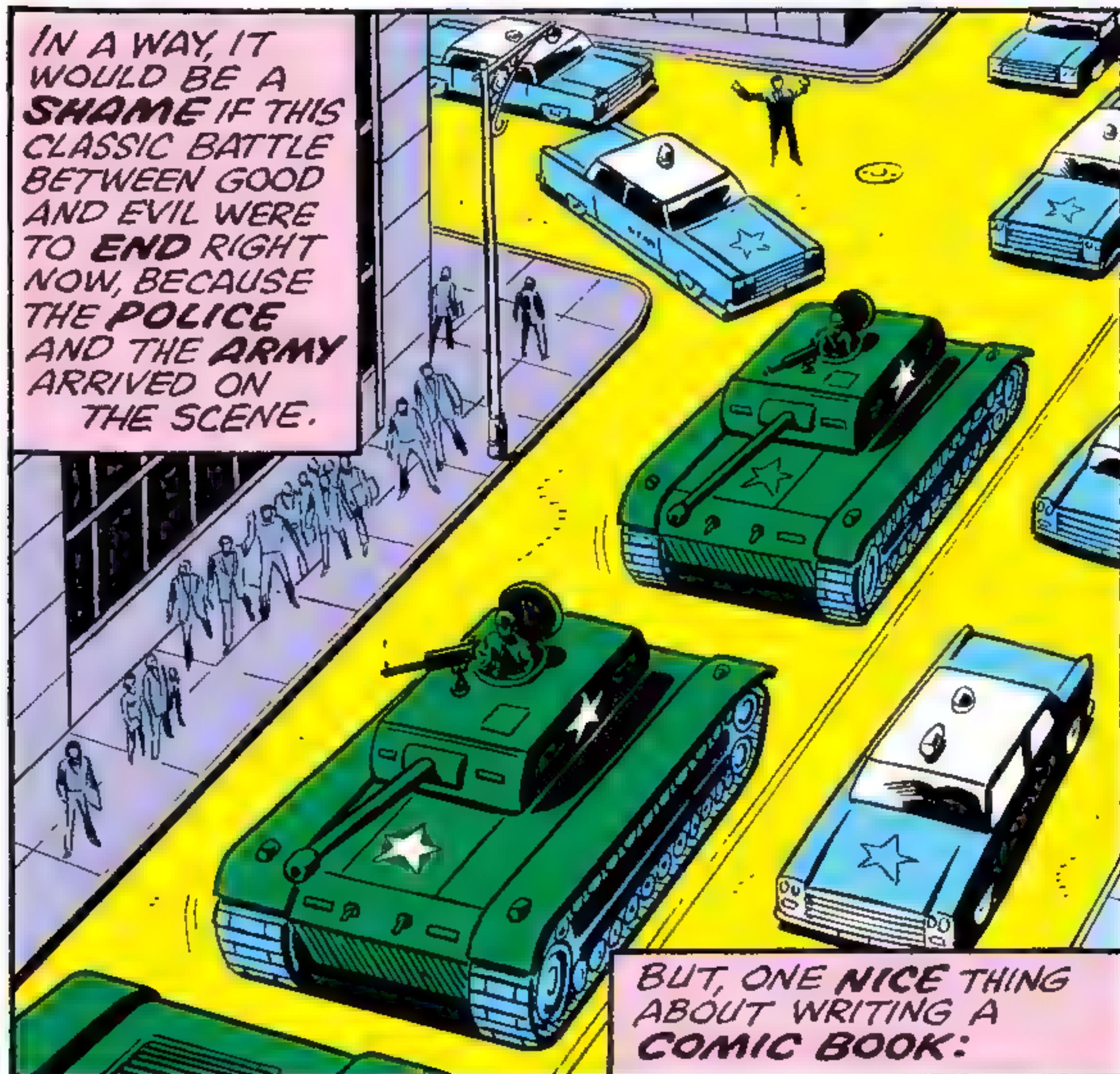
BLAM!

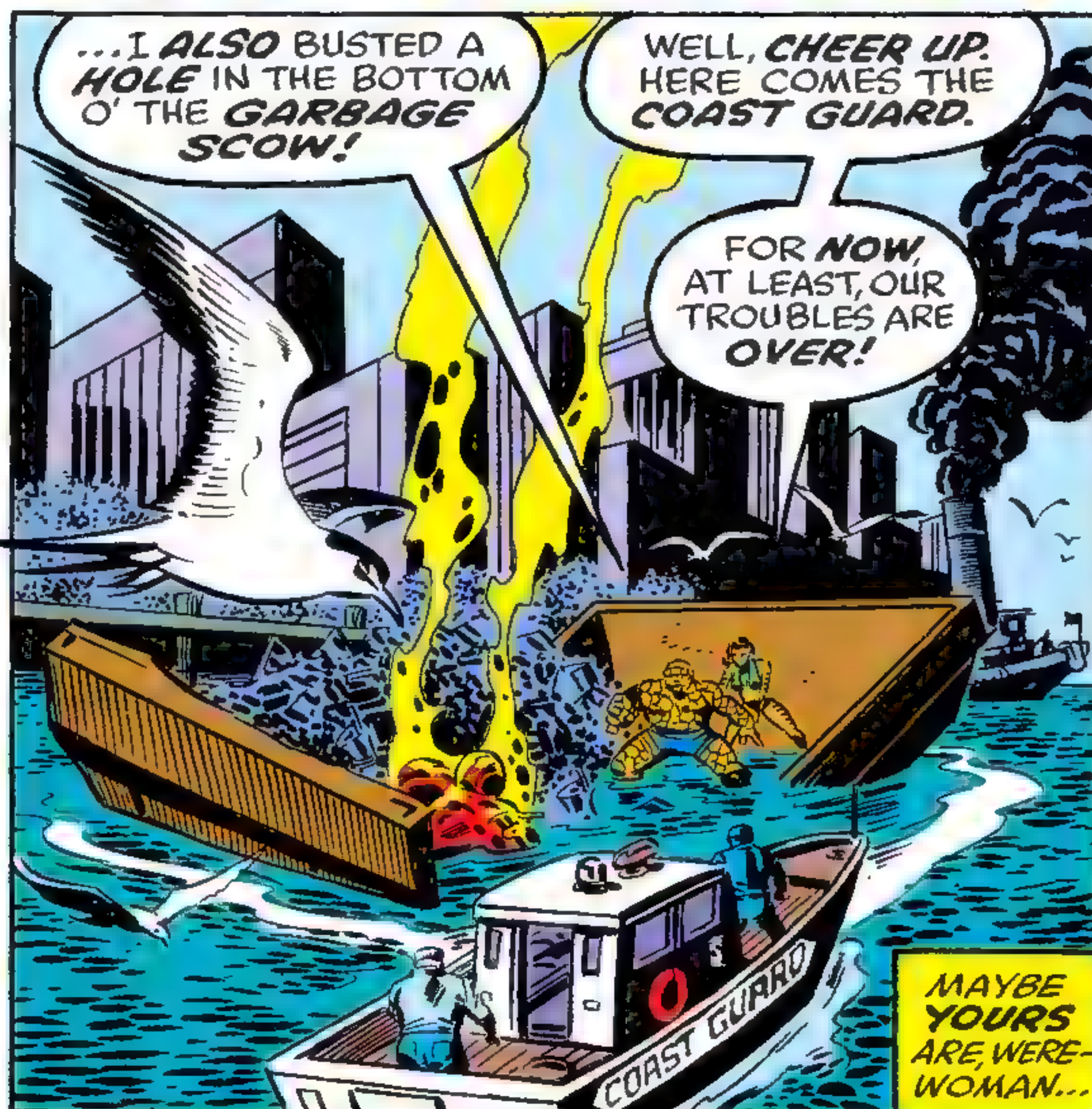
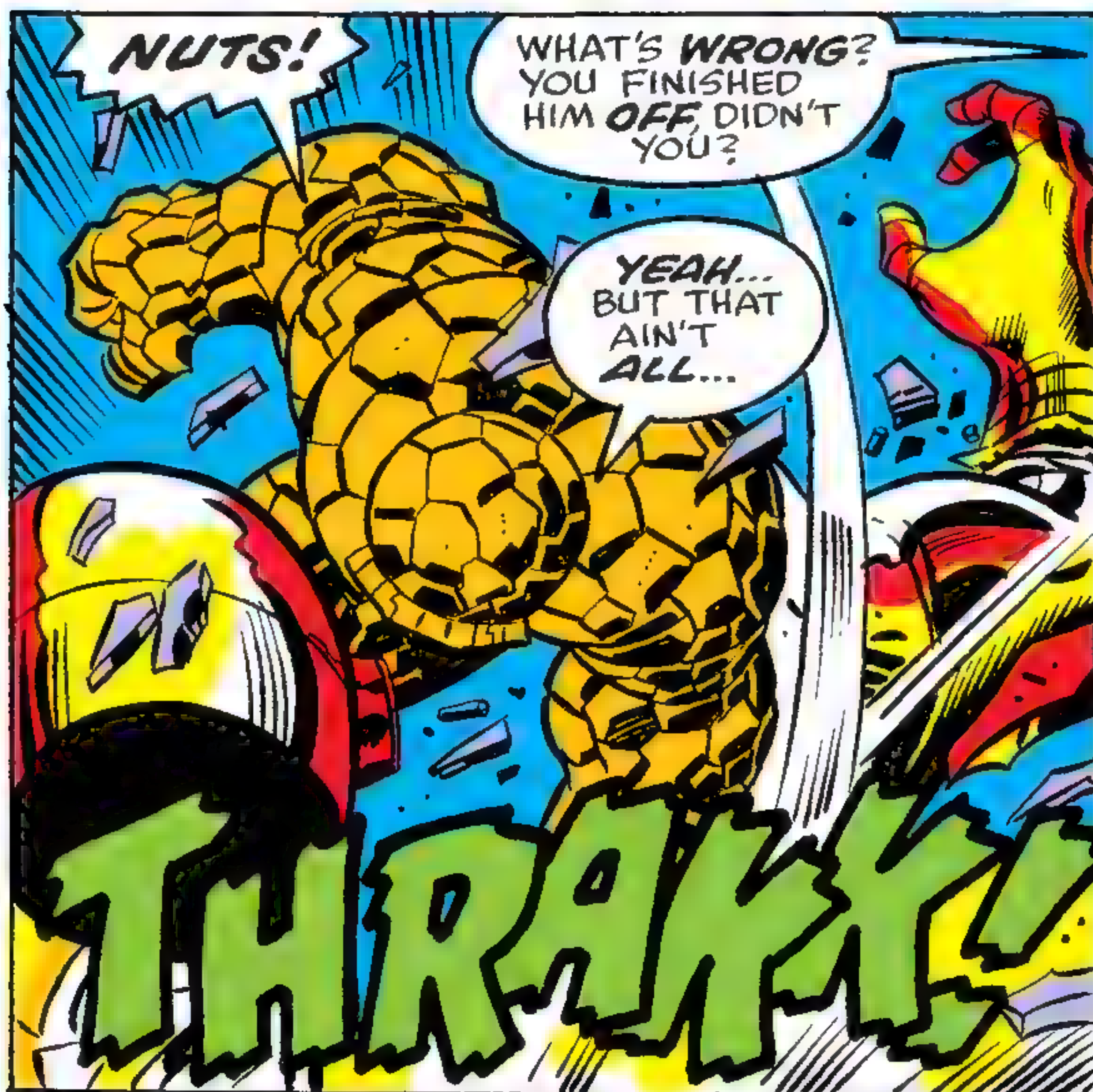
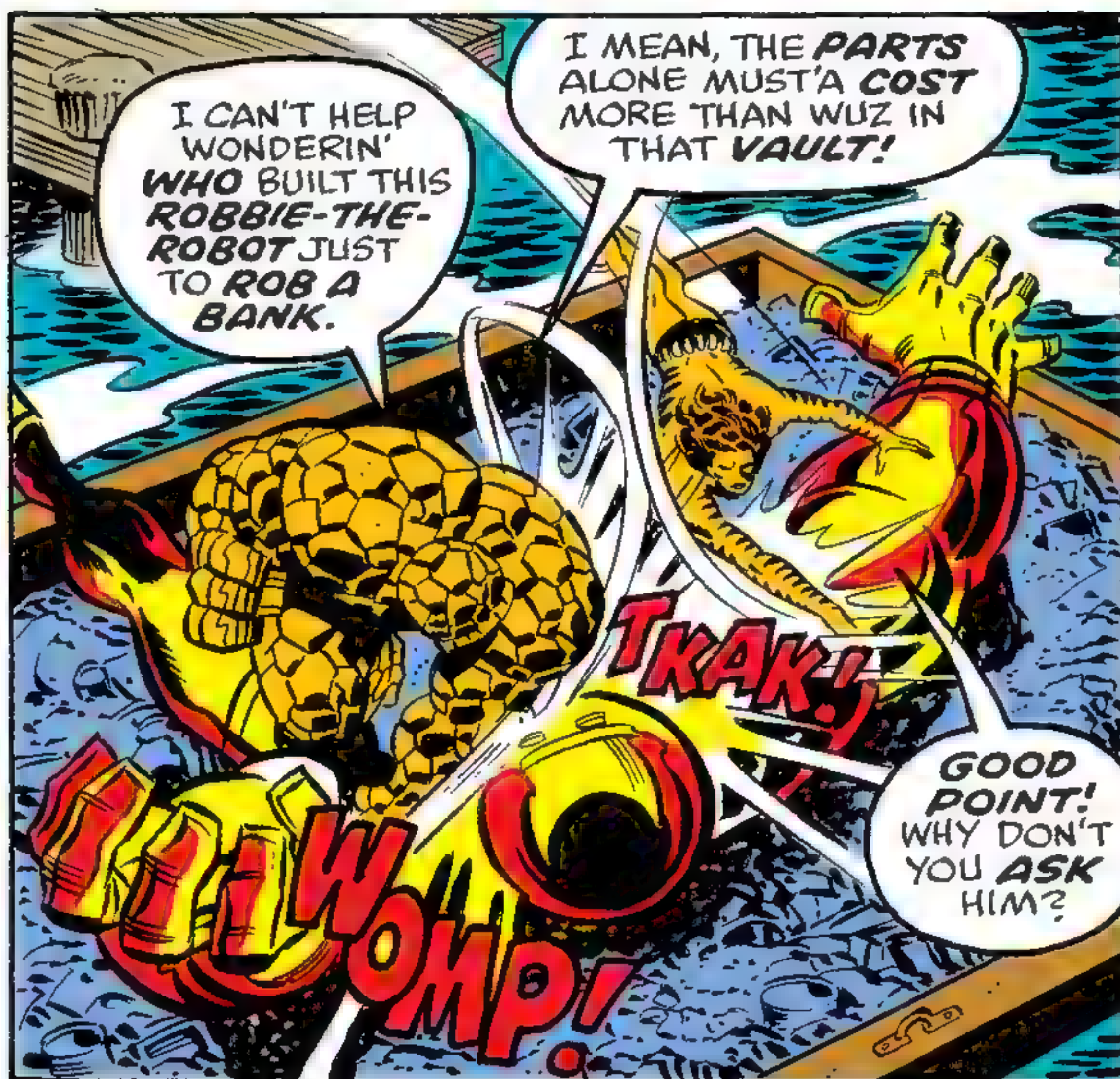
YOU'RE EX-CUSED, ROCK.

LET'S GO!

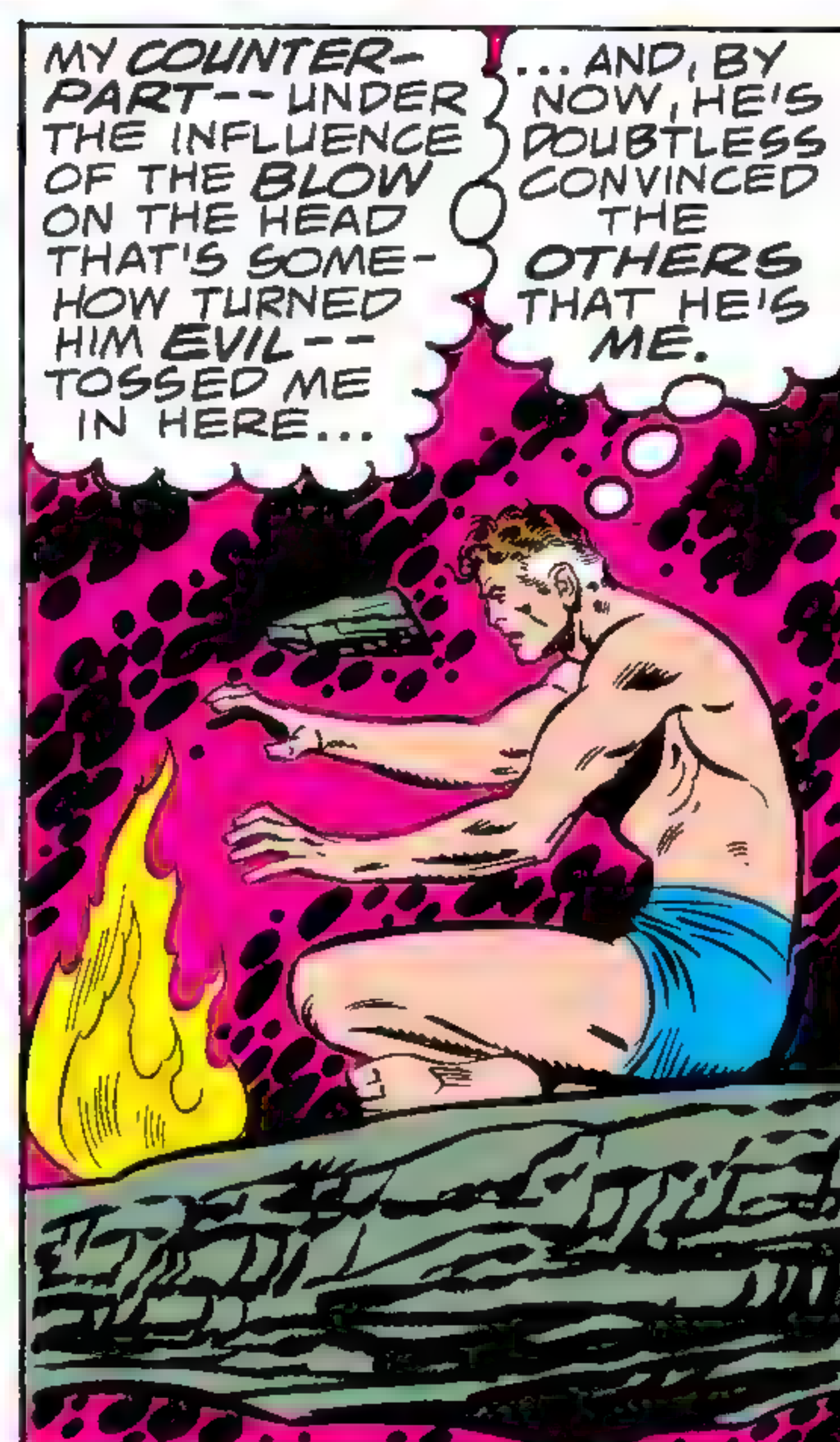
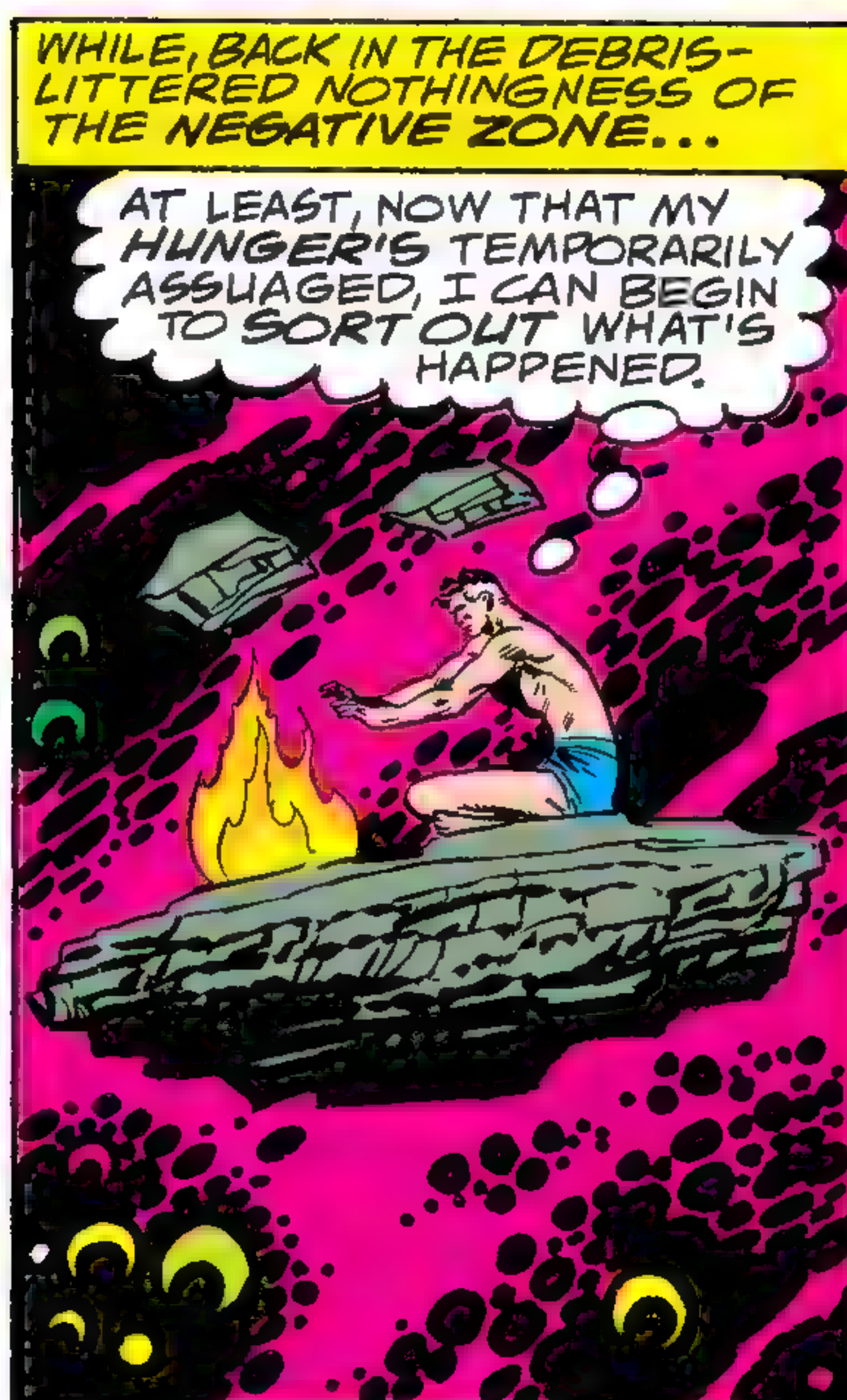
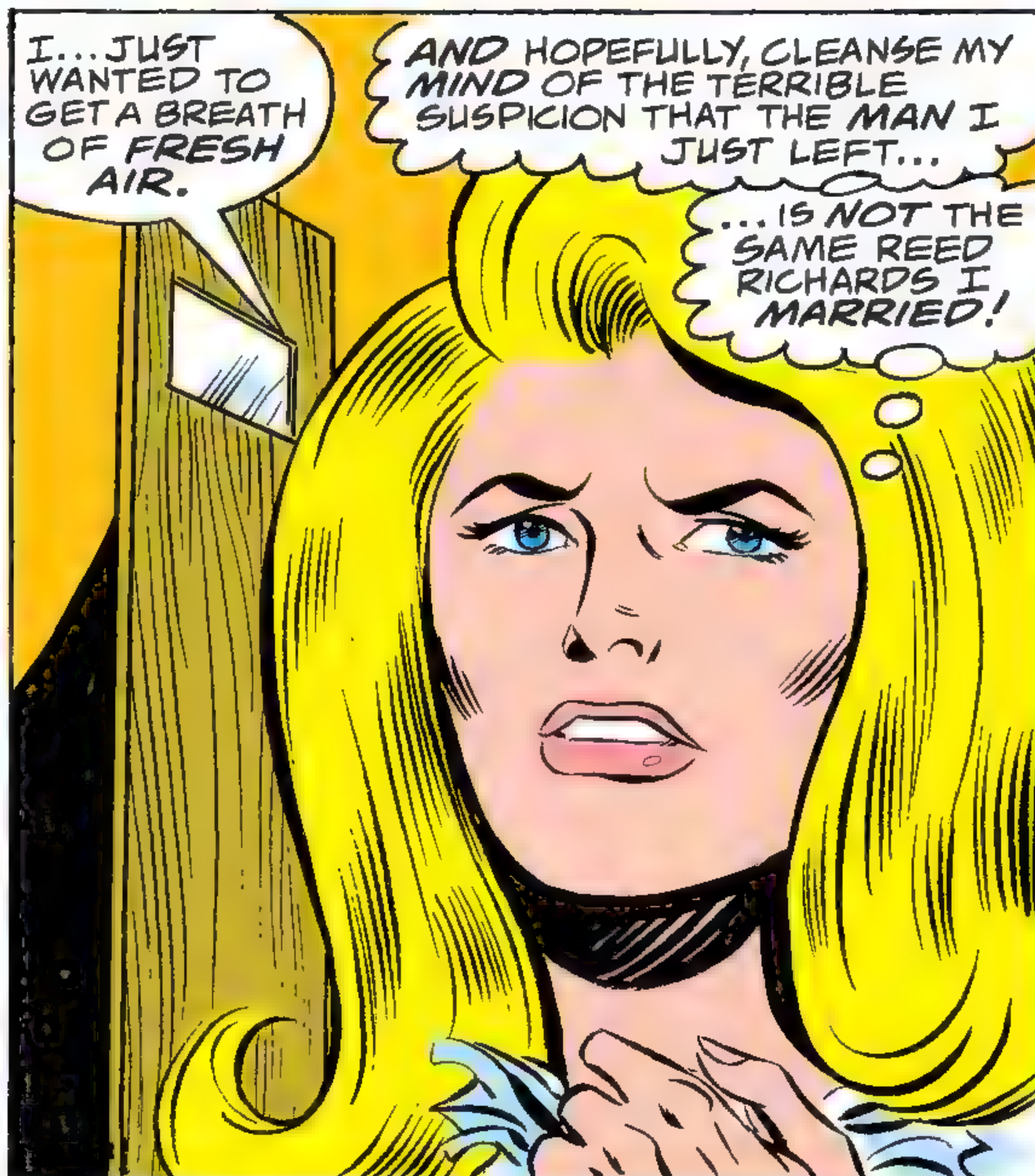
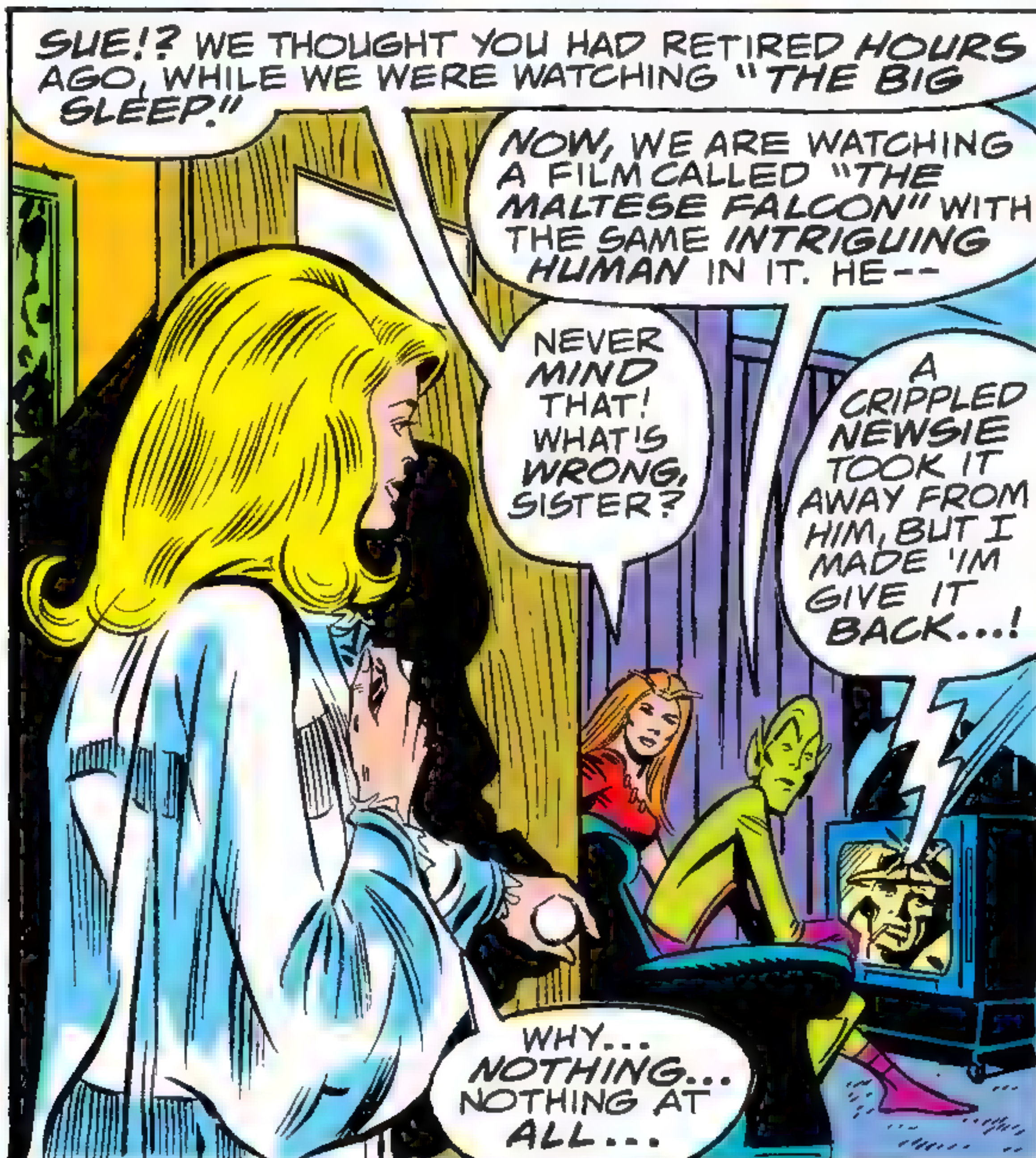
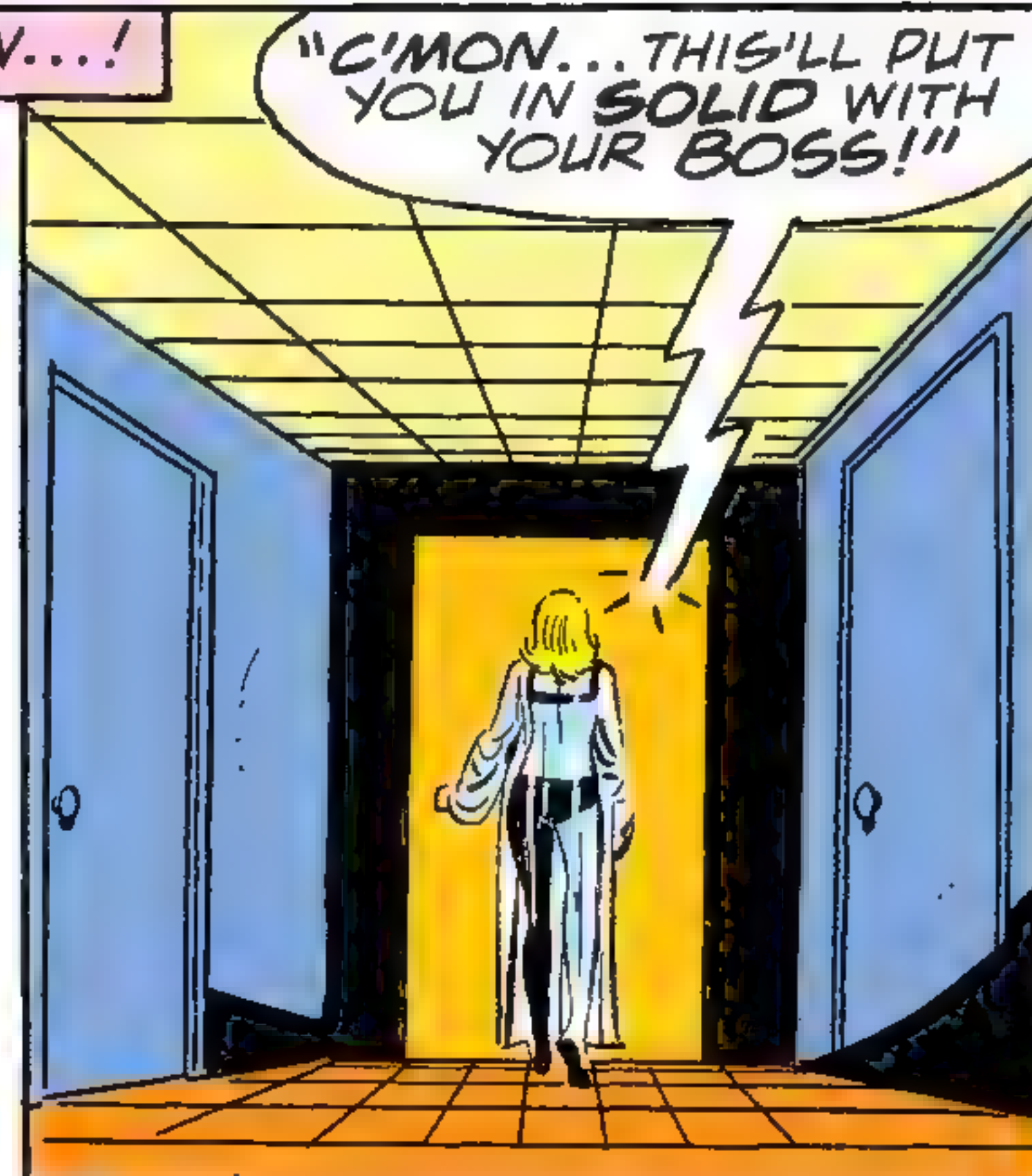
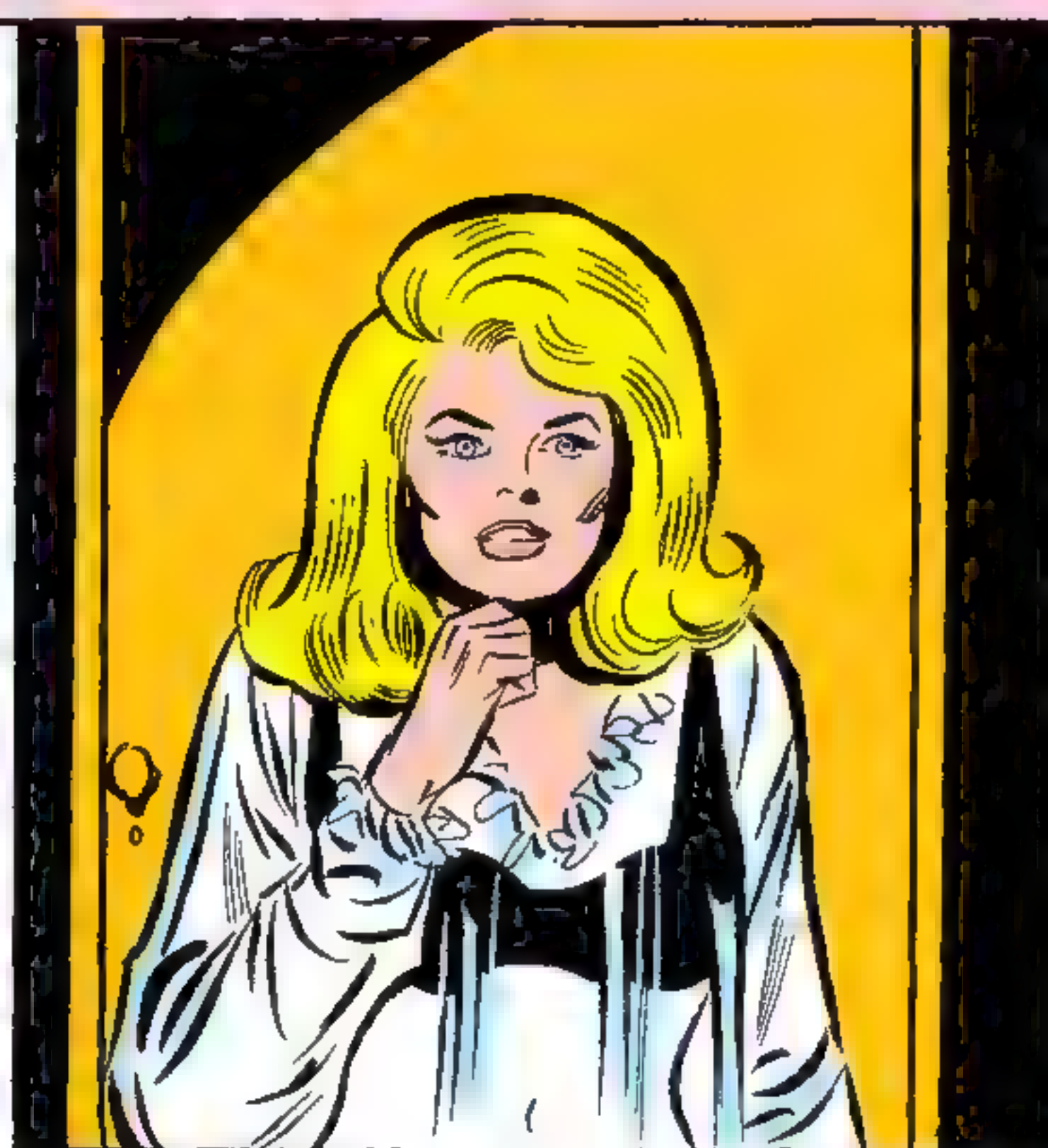


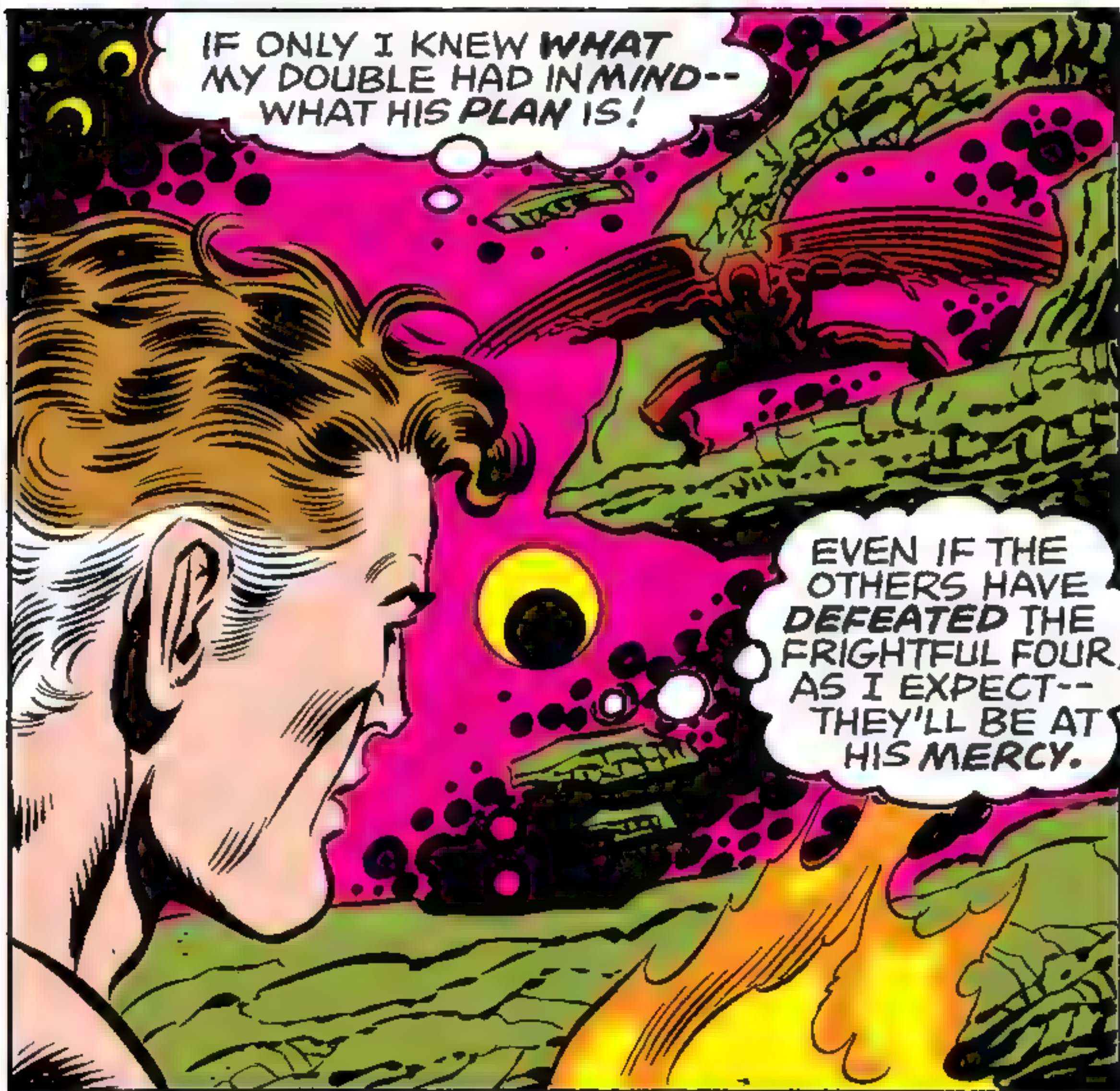






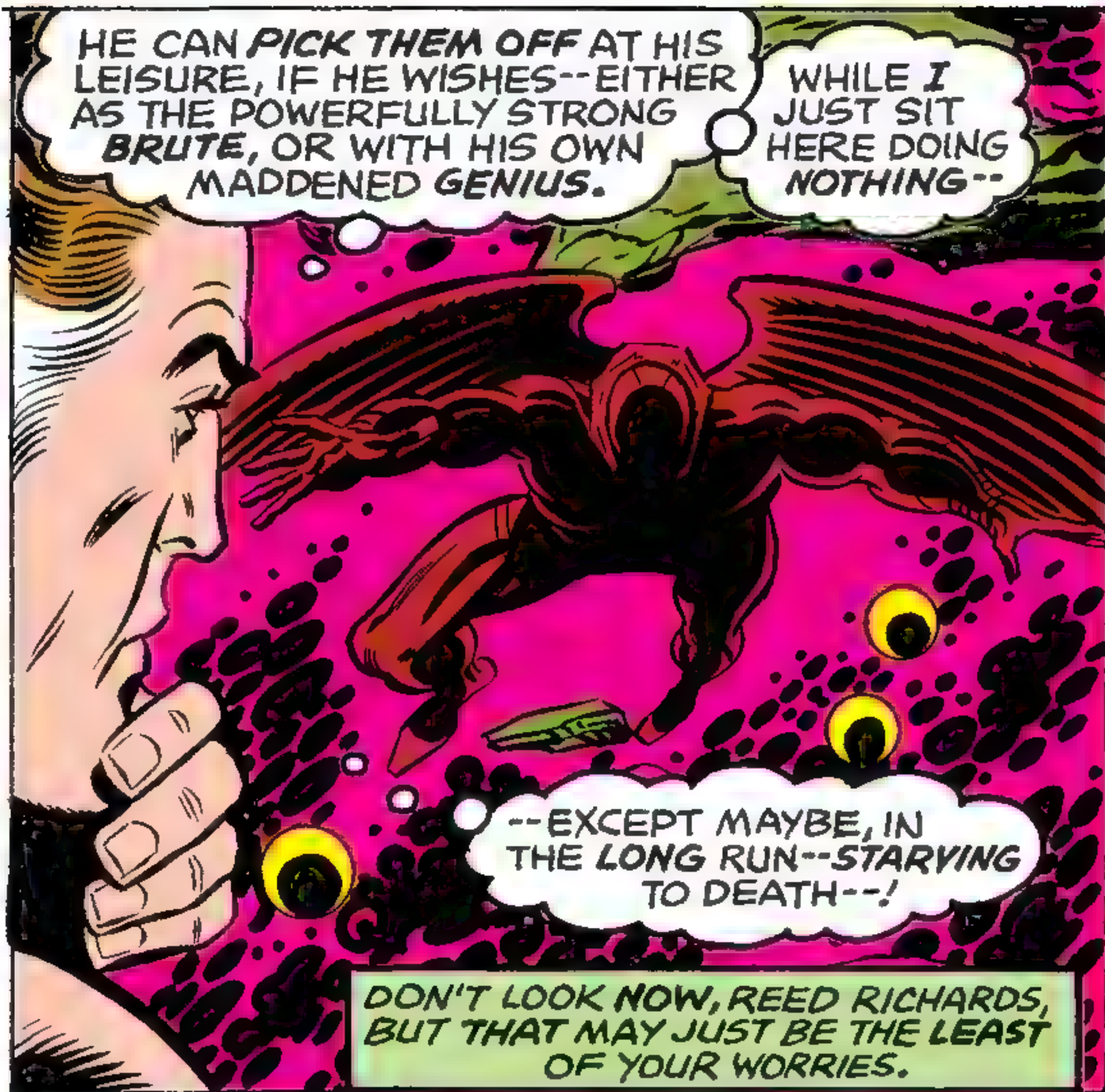
BUT, ALAS, NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF SOME OTHERS WE KNOW...!





IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT MY DOUBLE HAD IN MIND-- WHAT HIS PLAN IS!

EVEN IF THE OTHERS HAVE DEFEATED THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR, AS I EXPECT-- THEY'LL BE AT HIS MERCY.



HE CAN PICK THEM OFF AT HIS LEISURE, IF HE WISHES-- EITHER AS THE POWERFULLY STRONG BRUTE, OR WITH HIS OWN MADDENED GENIUS.

WHILE I JUST SIT HERE DOING NOTHING--

--EXCEPT MAYBE, IN THE LONG RUN--STARVING TO DEATH--!

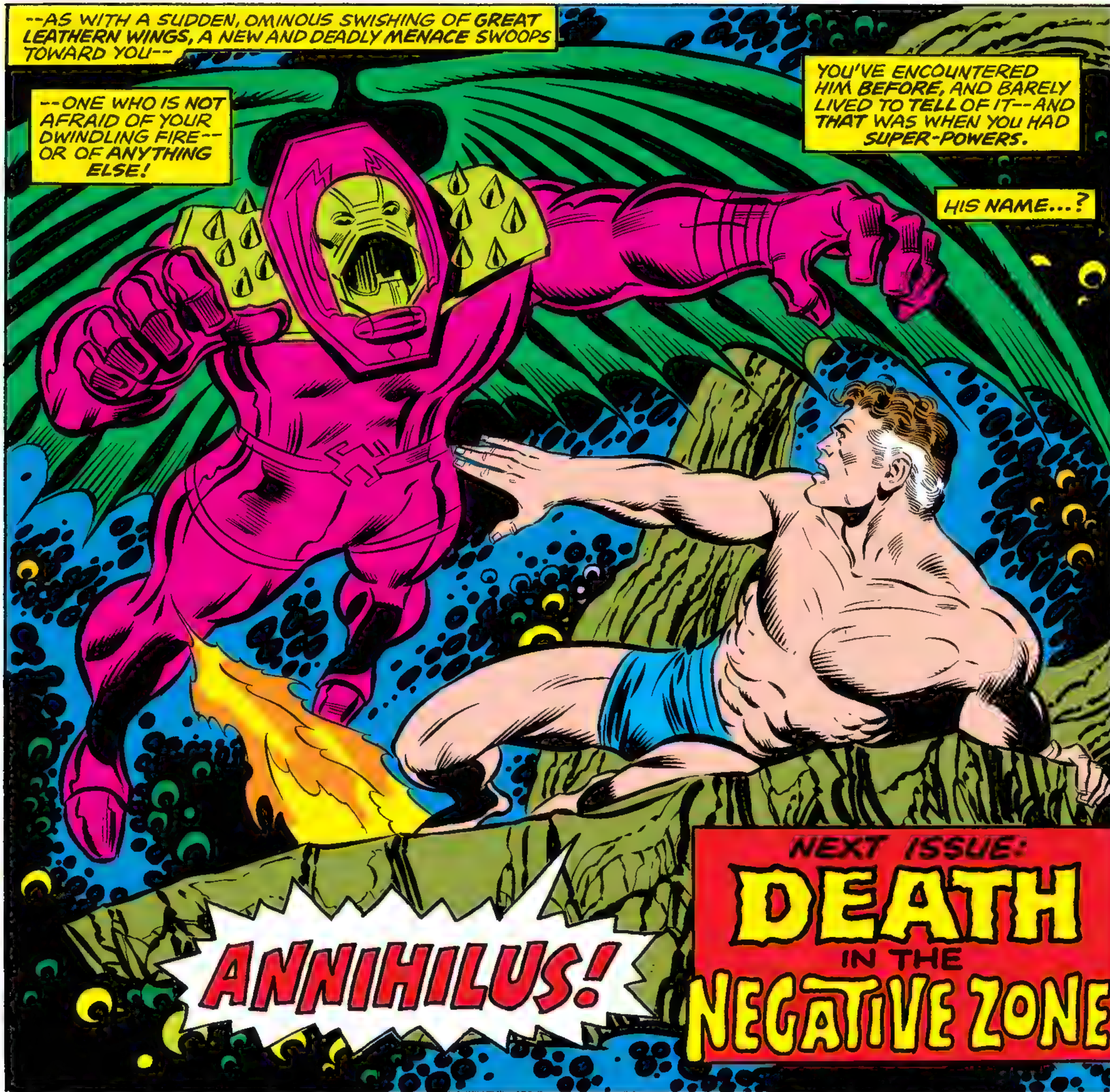
DON'T LOOK NOW, REED RICHARDS, BUT THAT MAY JUST BE THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES.

--AS WITH A SUDDEN, OMINOUS SWISHING OF GREAT LEATHERN WINGS, A NEW AND DEADLY MENACE SWOOPS TOWARD YOU--

--ONE WHO IS NOT AFRAID OF YOUR DWINDLING FIRE-- OR OF ANYTHING ELSE!

YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED HIM BEFORE, AND BARELY LIVED TO TELL OF IT--AND THAT WAS WHEN YOU HAD SUPER-POWERS.

HIS NAME...?



ANNIHILUS!

NEXT ISSUE:
DEATH
IN THE
NEGATIVE ZONE!

FANTASTIC
FOUR

30¢
©
180
MAR
02962

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR



©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

KEEP
BACK, TROOPS!
MAYBE THE
FANTASTIC FOUR
WOULD TURN THIS
ROBOT OVER
TO YA--

BUT
THIS LITTLE
FOURSOME'S
KEEPIN' IT--
NO MATTER
WHAT!!

IN THAT CASE--
PREPARE TO
FIRE!



FANTASTIC
FOUR

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



30¢
©

181
APR
02962

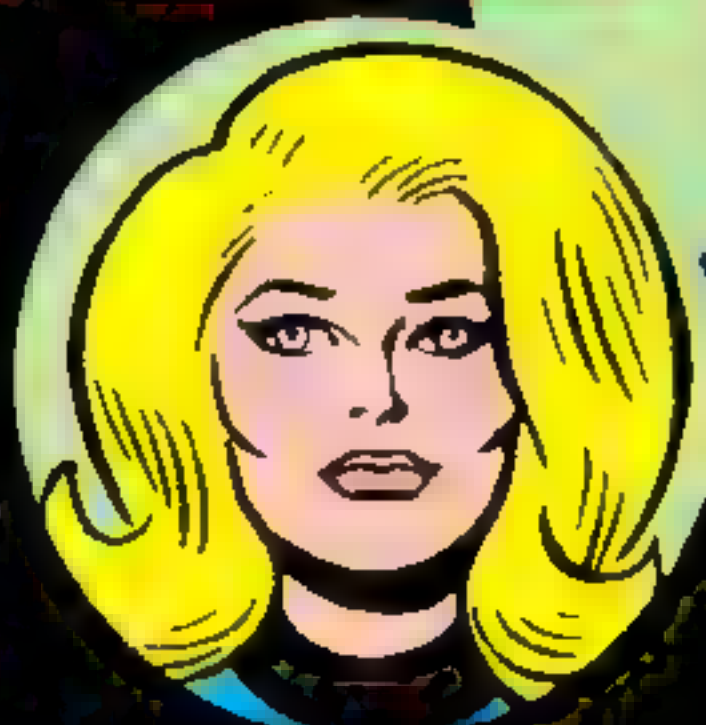
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

FANTASTIC FOUR®



TM



TM



**FLAME
ON!**

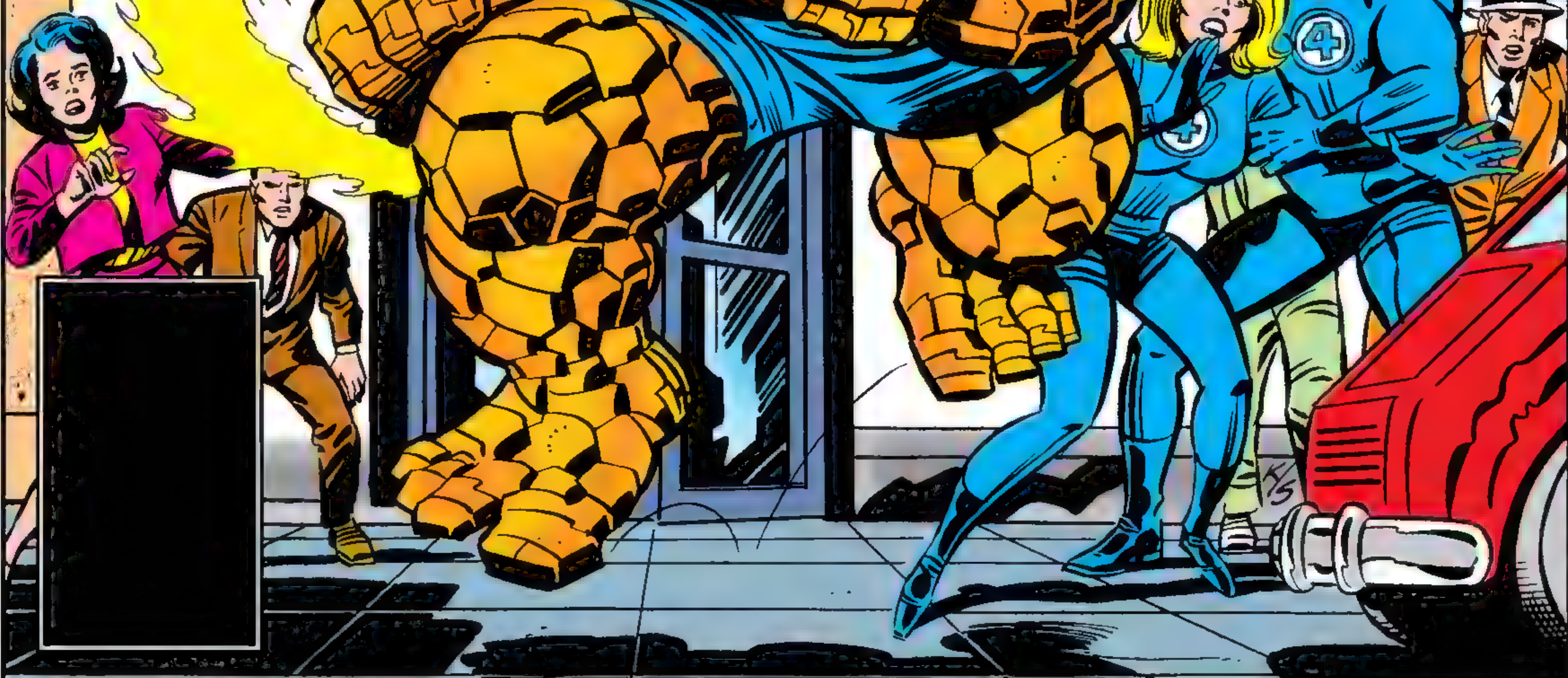
OUTTA MY
WAY, FIRE BUG!

**IT'S
CLOBBERIN'
TIME!**

WATER BUILDING

NO, SUE!
STAY BACK!
THIS IS THEIR
FIGHT--

--AND WE
CAN'T HELP
THEM!



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

SIDE BY SIDE WITH... ANNIHILUS??

Y'KNOW SOMETHING, FRANTIC ONE? WE JUST REALIZED THAT THIS IS THE **THIRD** ISSUE IN A ROW THAT WE'VE STARTED OUT OUR LITTLE STORY IN THE NIGHTMARISH **NEGATIVE ZONE!**

BUT, FOR THE EXILED REED RICHARDS, THIS MAY WELL BE THE **LAST** TIME HE'LL APPEAR **ANYWHERE**, UNLESS HE CAN INSTANTLY STAVE OFF THE AWESOME THREAT OF--



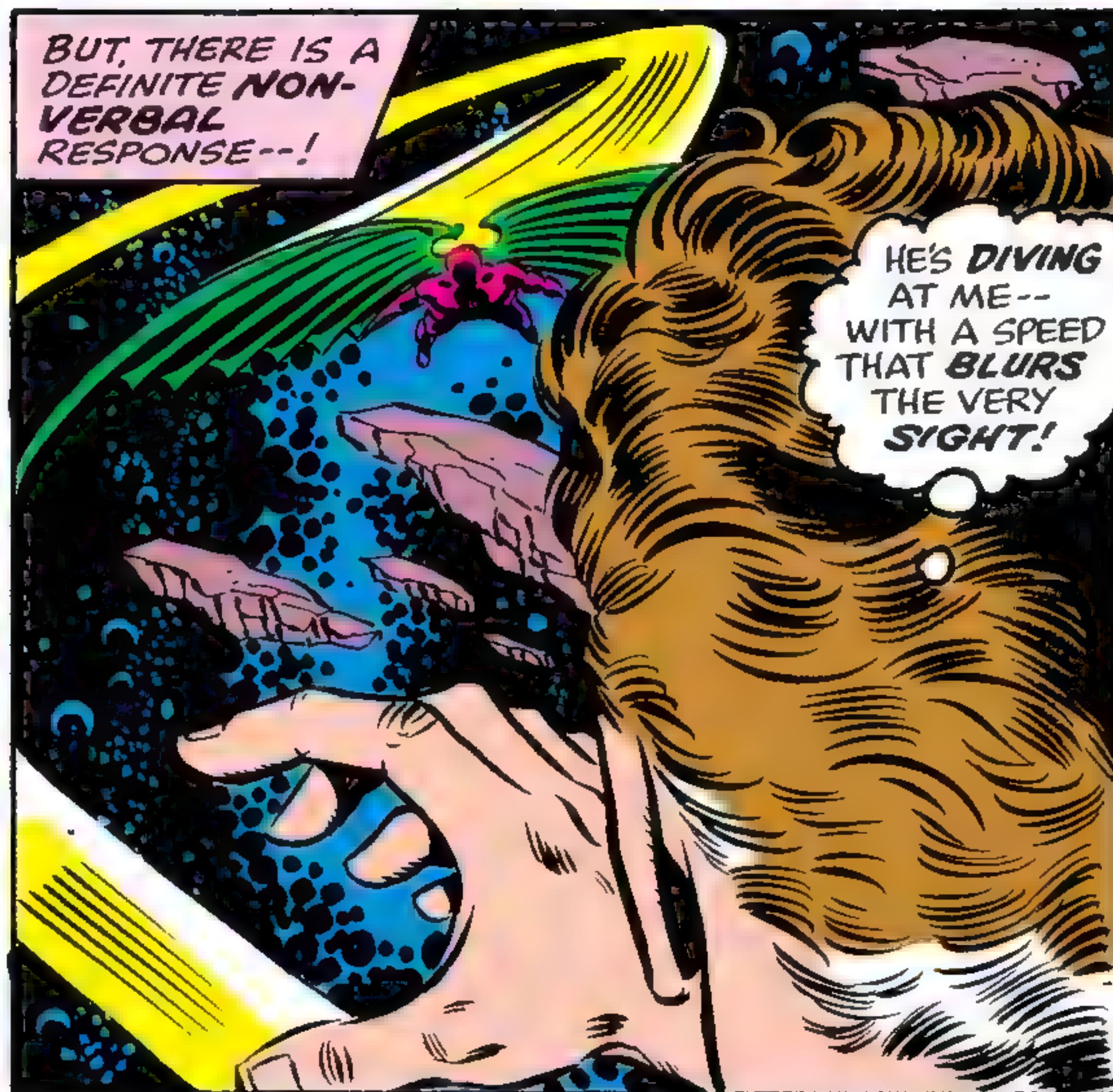
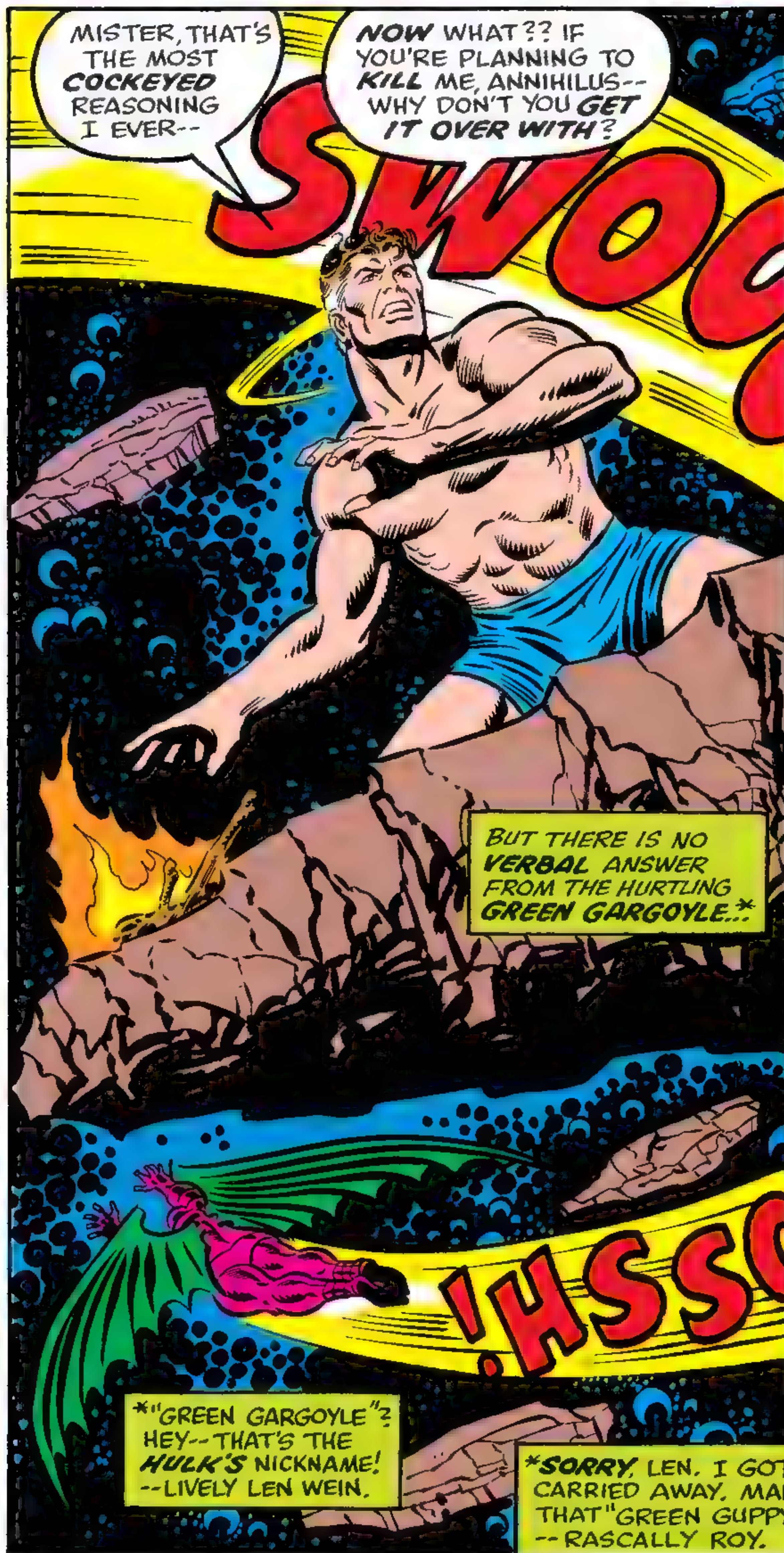
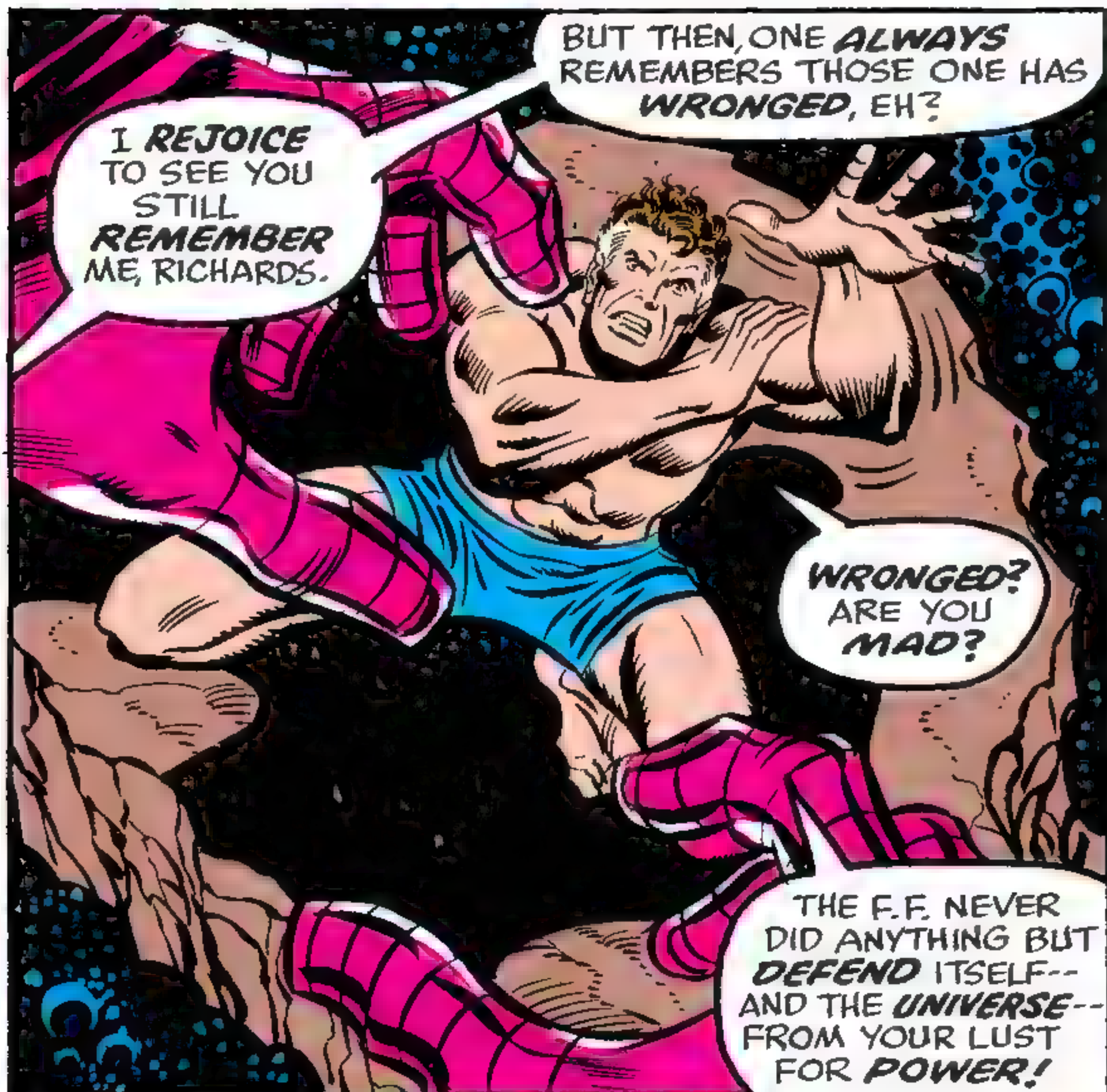
ANNIHILUS!

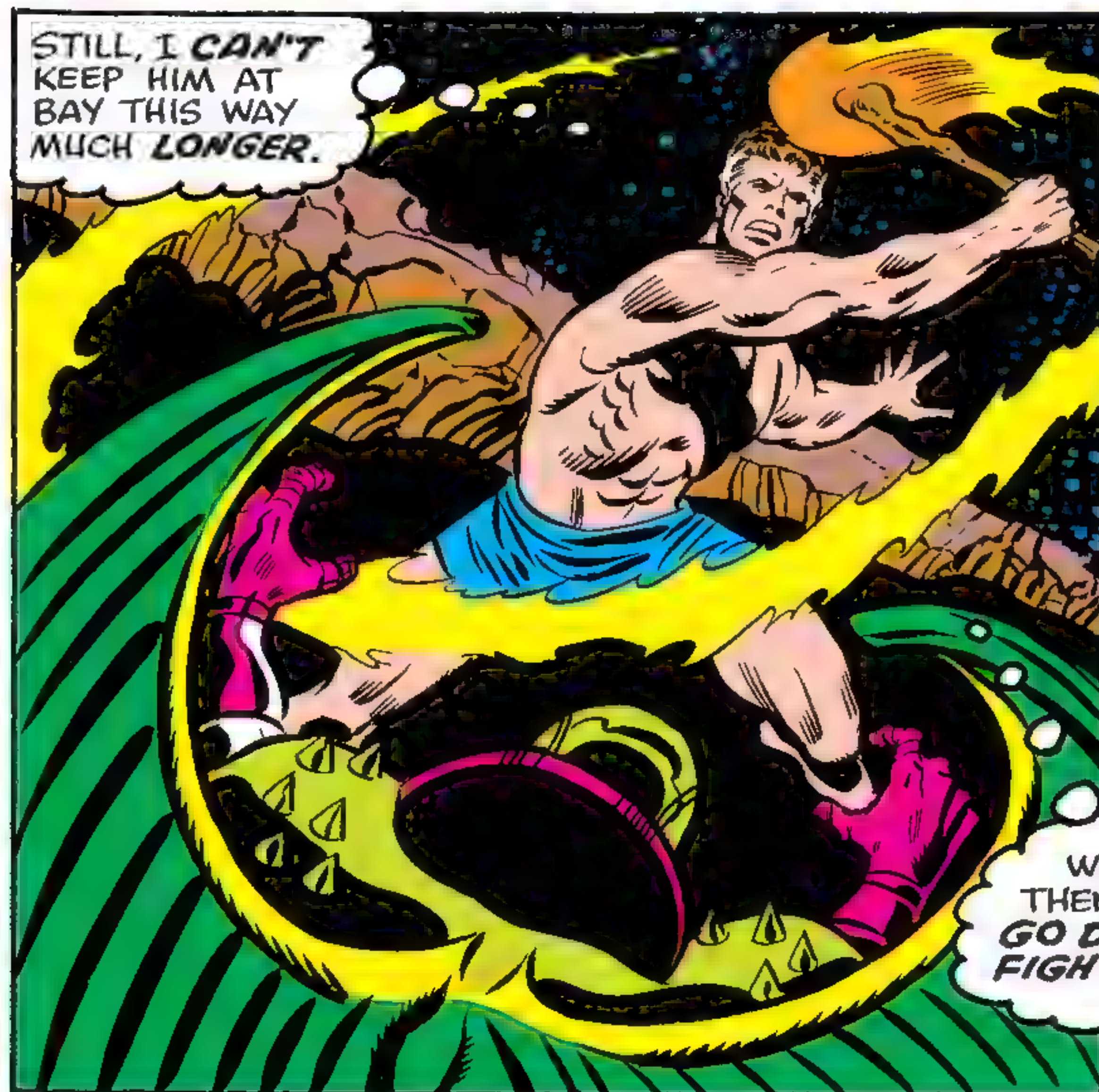
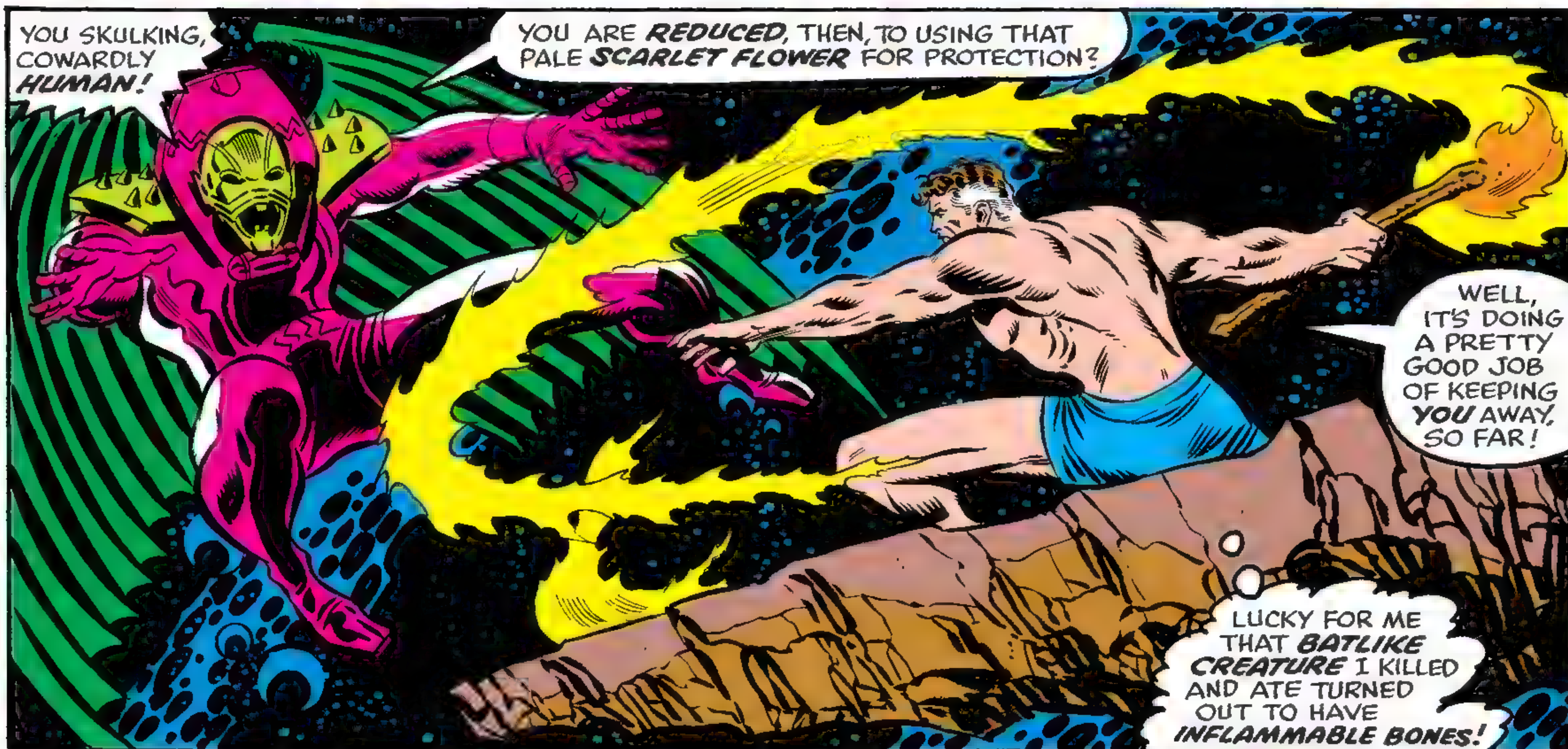
ROY * RON & JOE
THOMAS * WILSON SINNOTT
WRITER / EDITOR ILLUSTRATORS

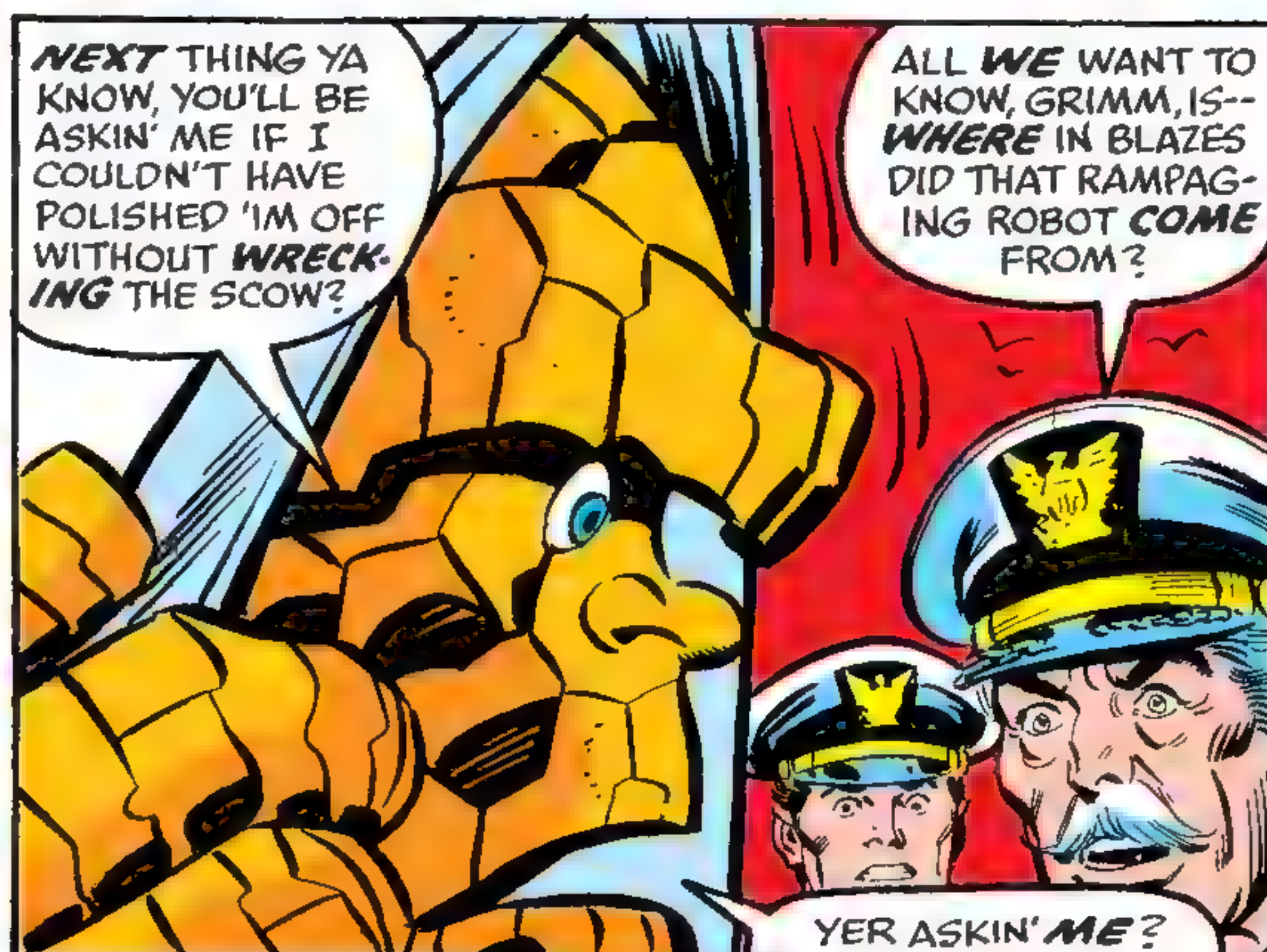
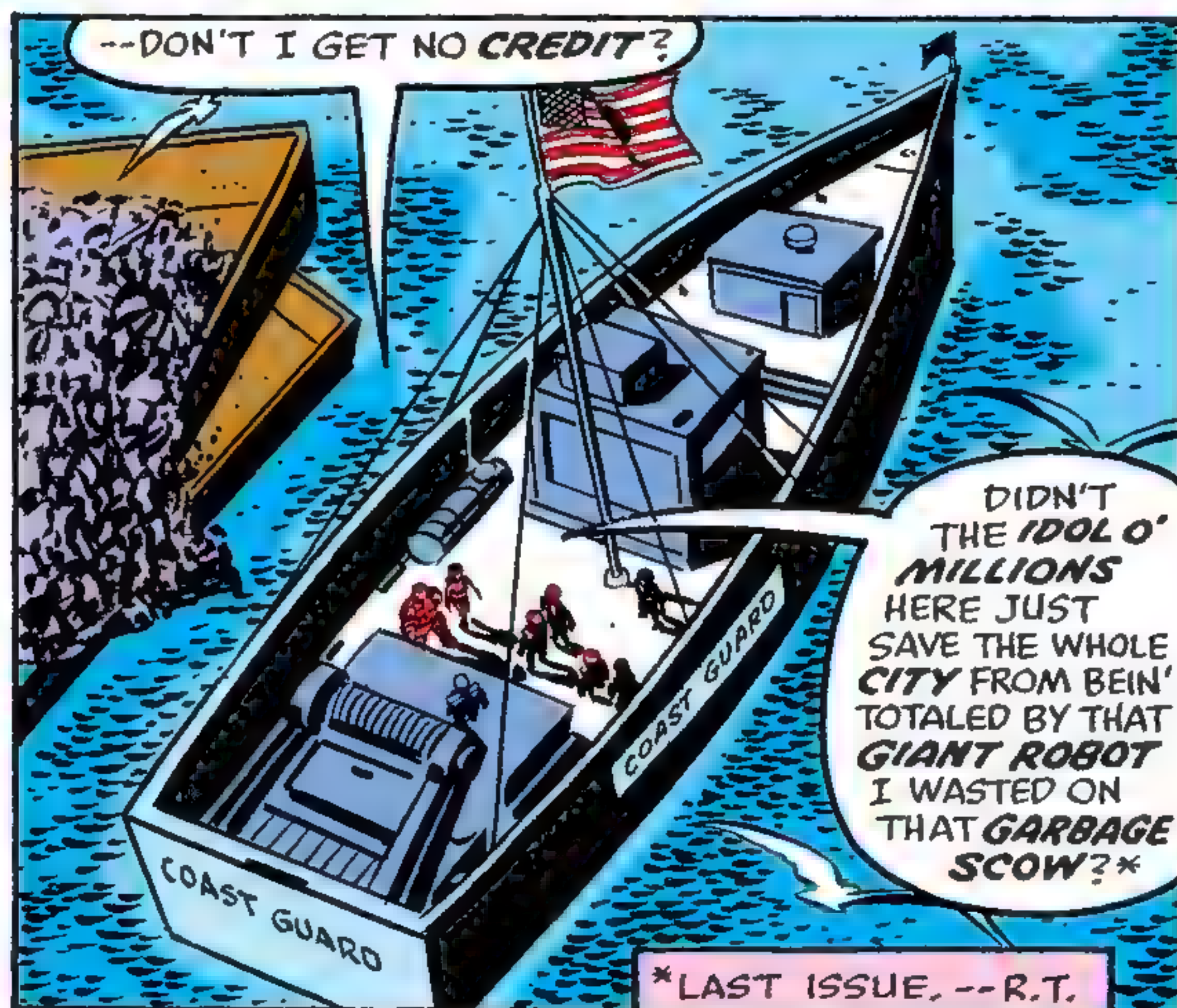
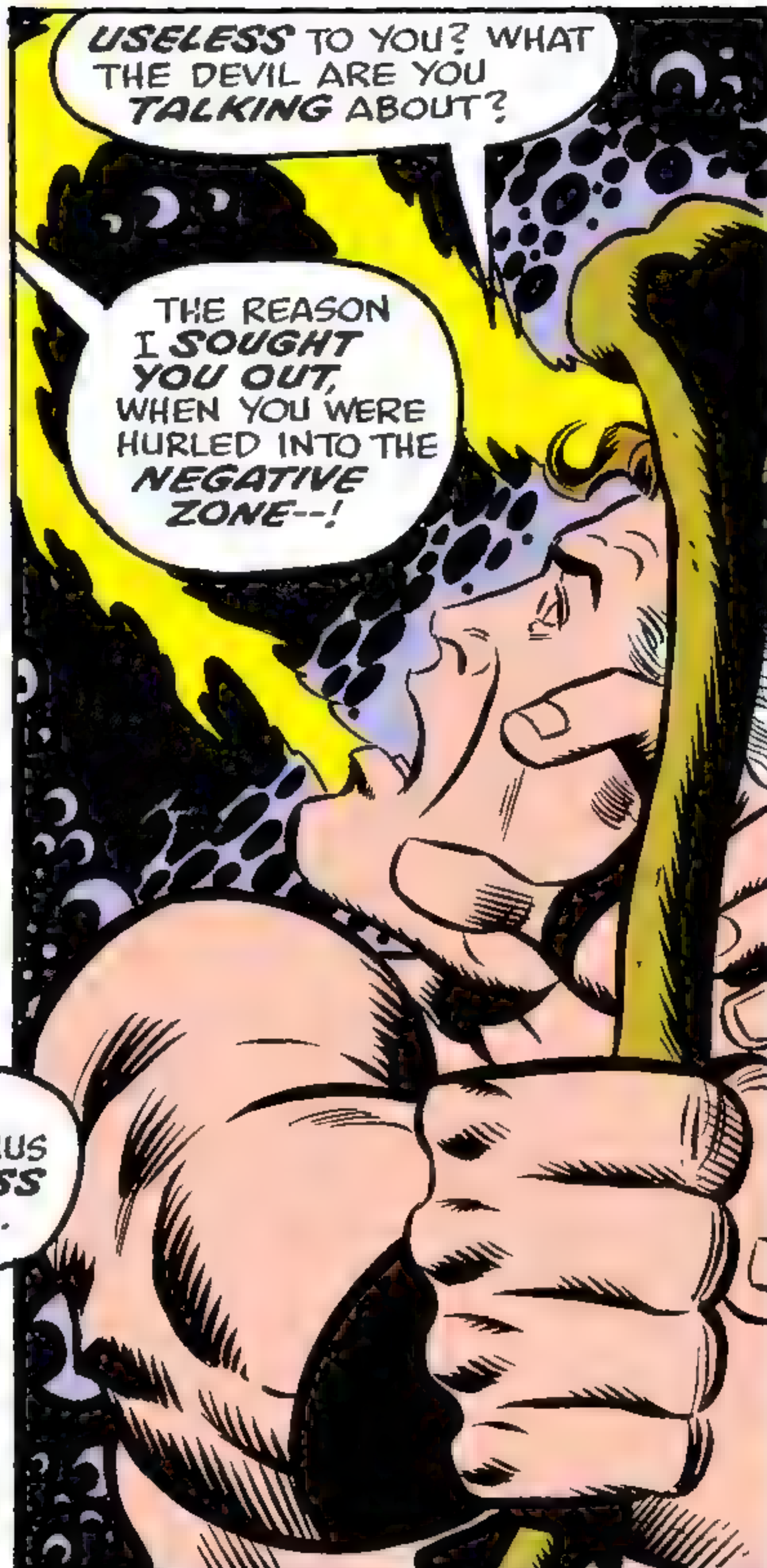
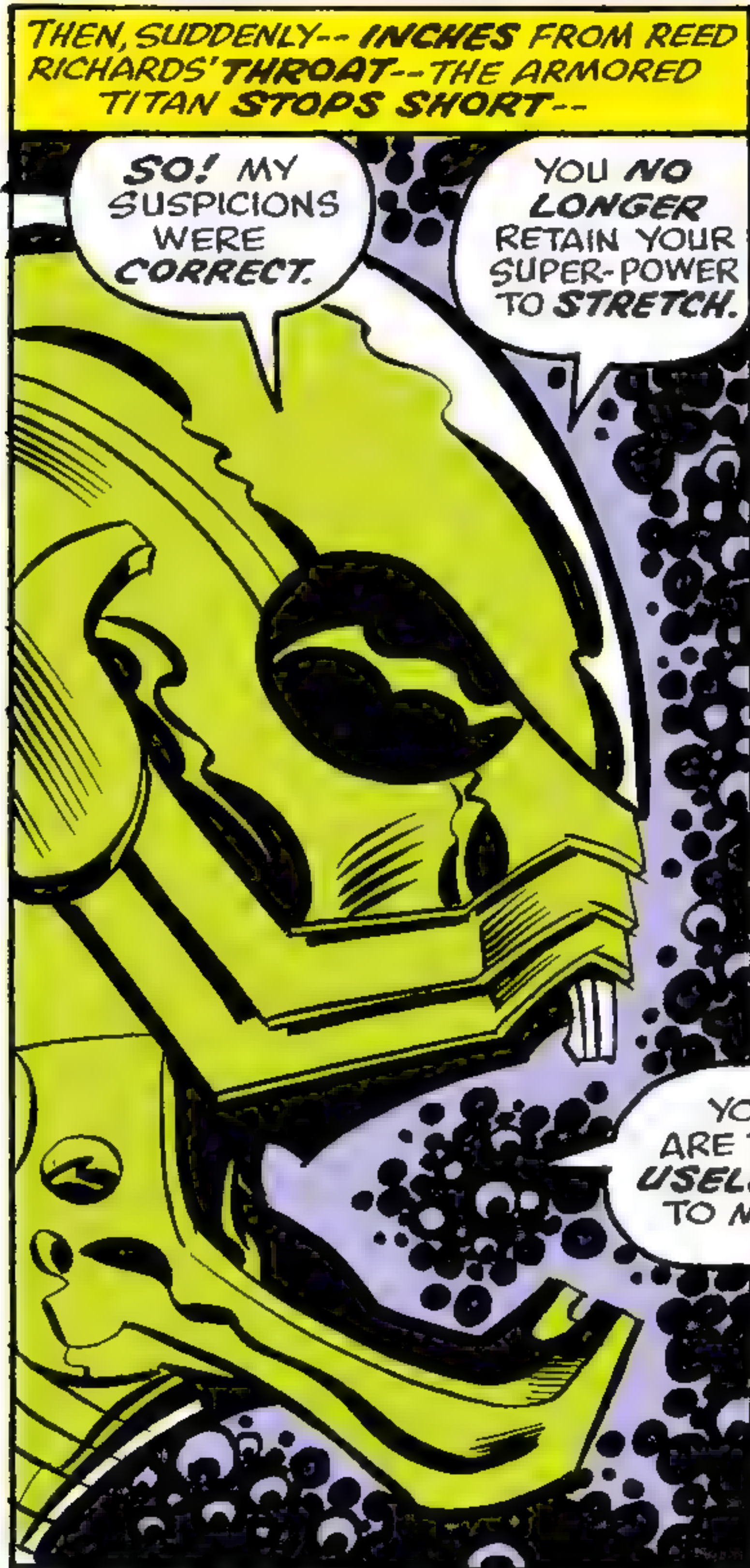
G. ROUSSOS
COLORIST

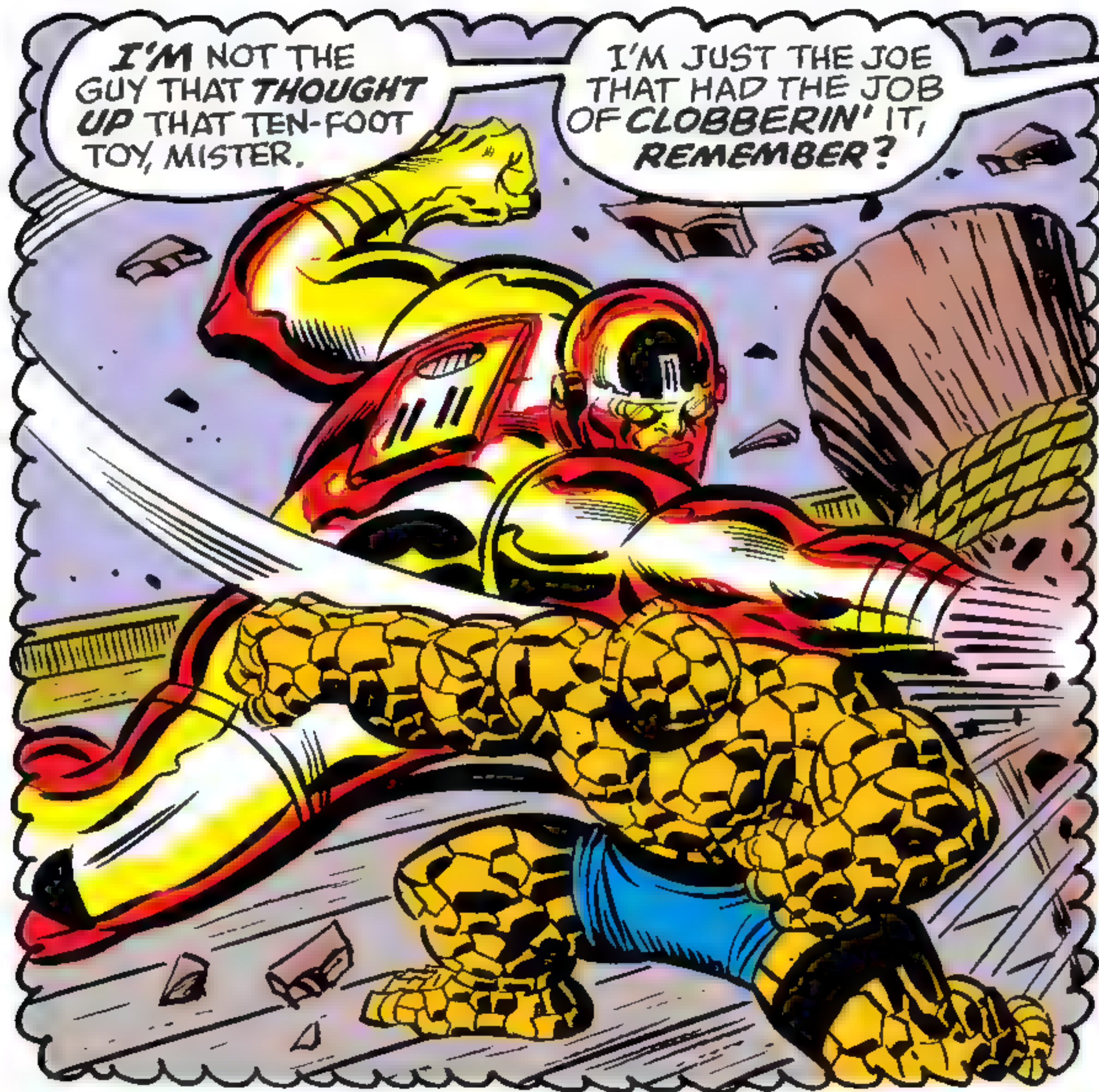
JOE ROSEN
LETTERER

AND, WHILE PACE-SETTER GEORGE PEREZ NURSES AN AILING DRAWING HAND, WHAT SAY WE ROCKET RIGHT ALONG --?









I'M NOT THE GUY THAT **THOUGHT UP** THAT TEN-FOOT TOY, MISTER.

I'M JUST THE JOE THAT HAD THE JOB OF **CLOBBERIN' IT**, REMEMBER?



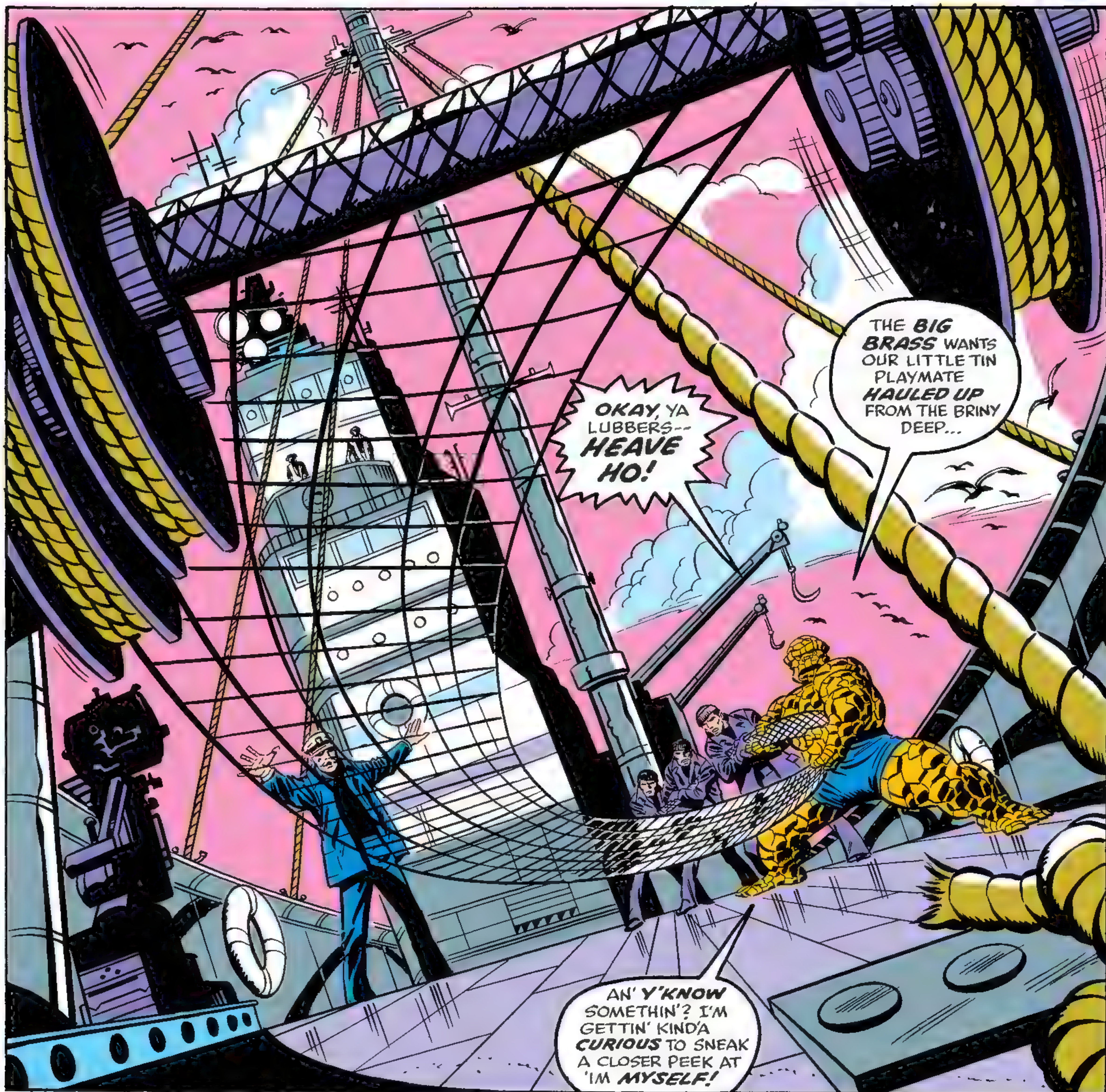
--WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE **LADY** HERE, NATCH!

OF **COURSE**. ER, IS THERE SOMETHING **WRONG**, MISS?

JUST SHAKING OUT MY **FUR**, CAP'N.

US **CATS** DON'T CARE MUCH FOR **WATER**-- OR DIDN'T YOU **KNOW**?

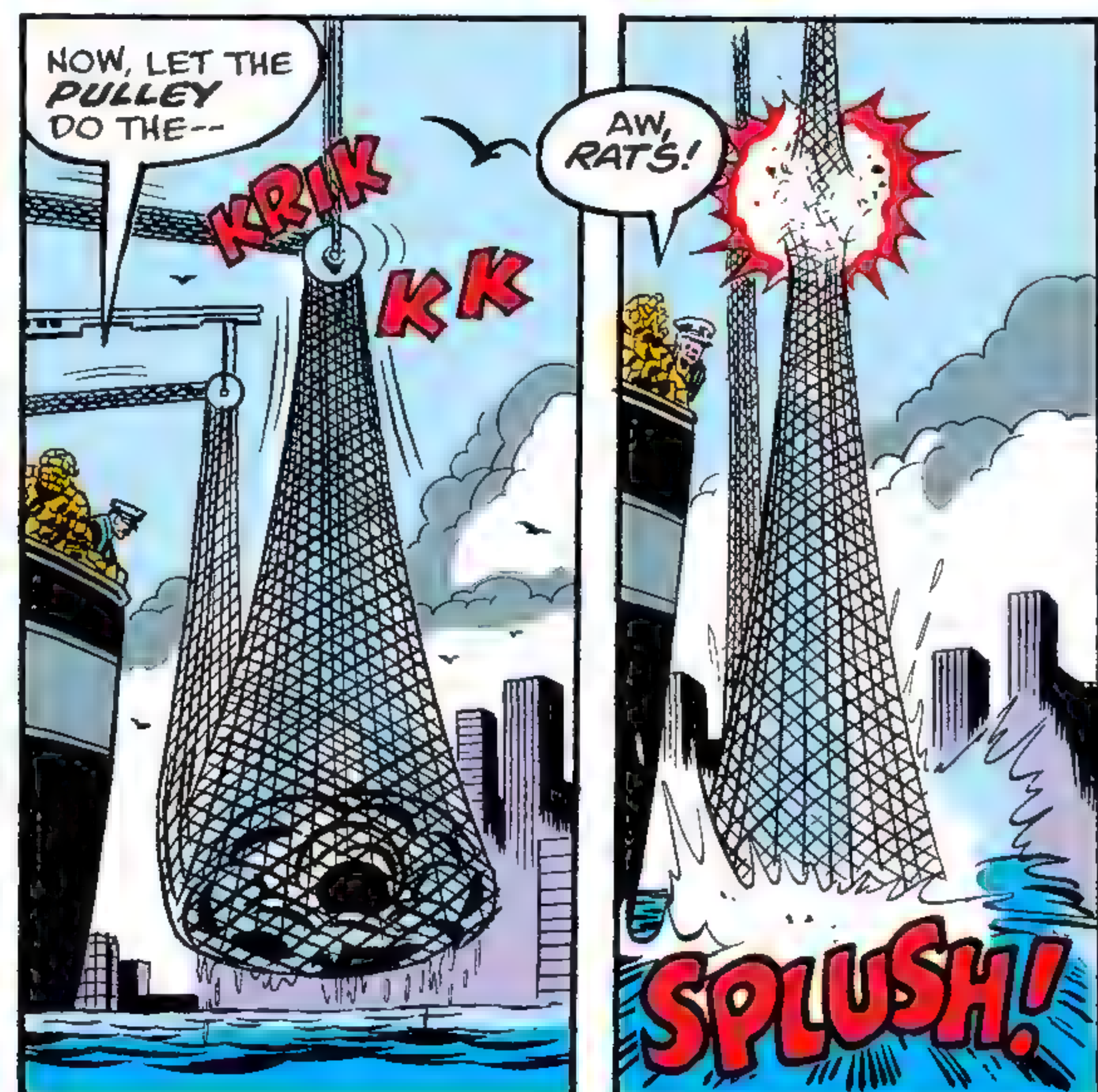
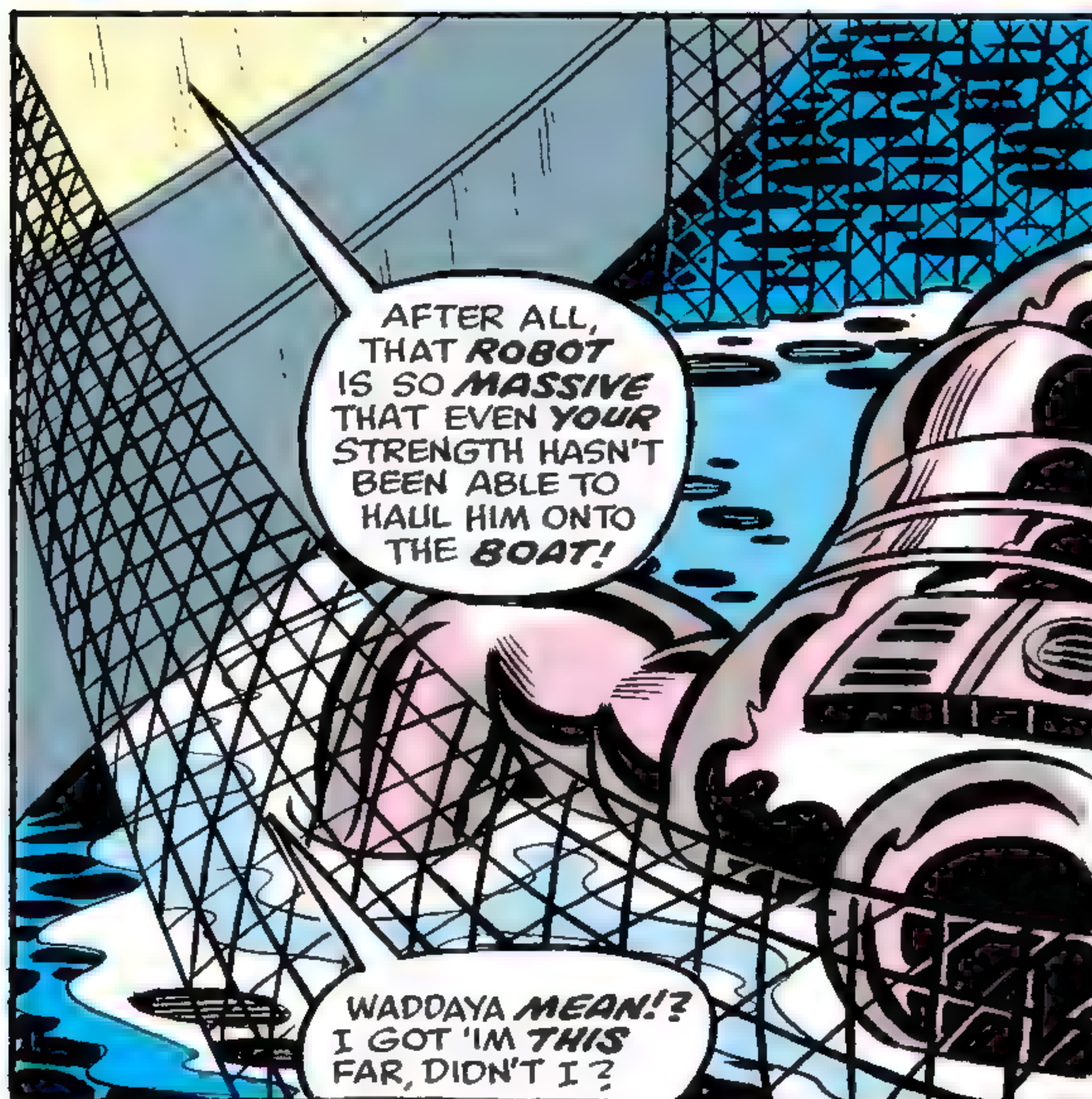
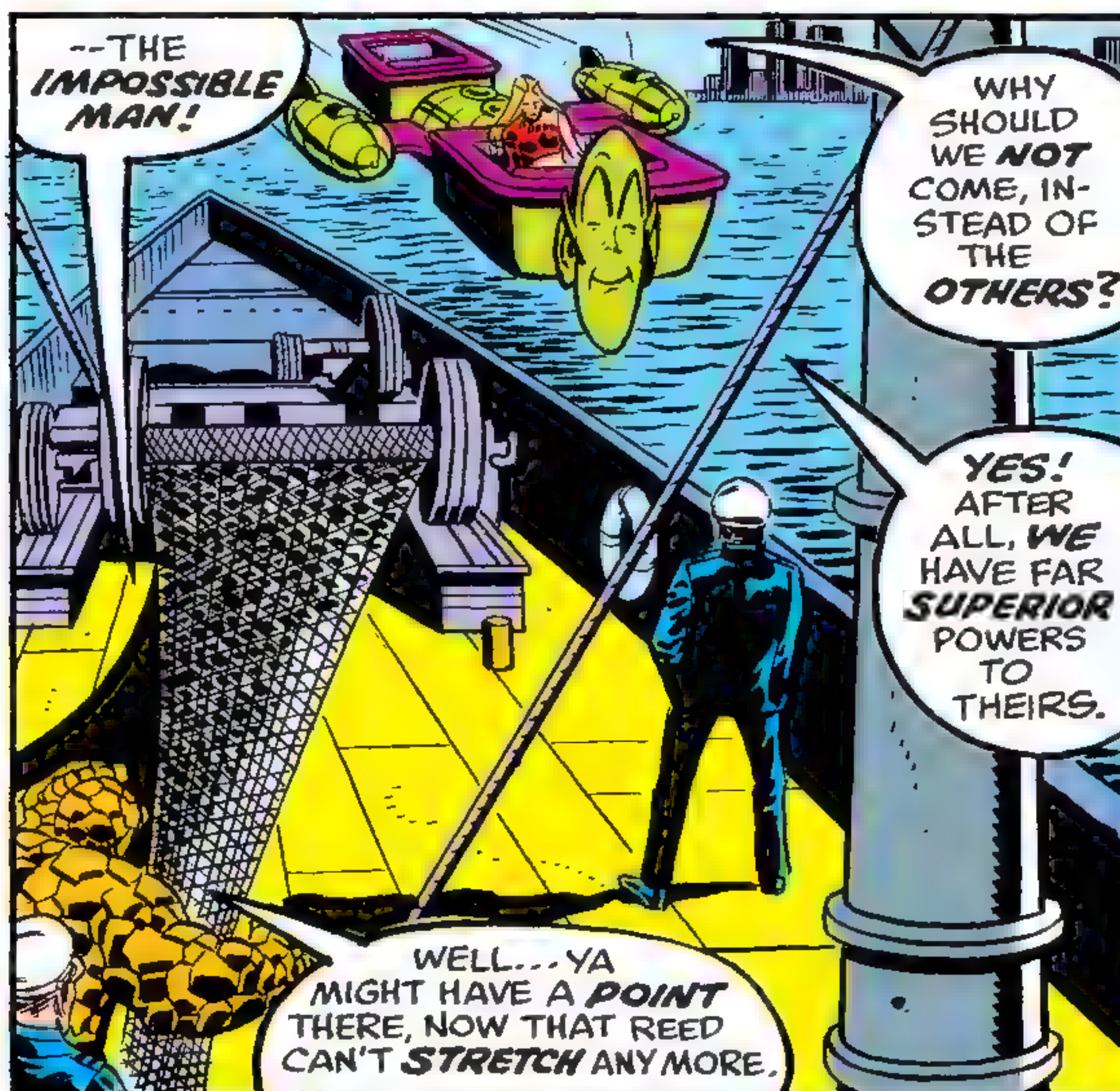
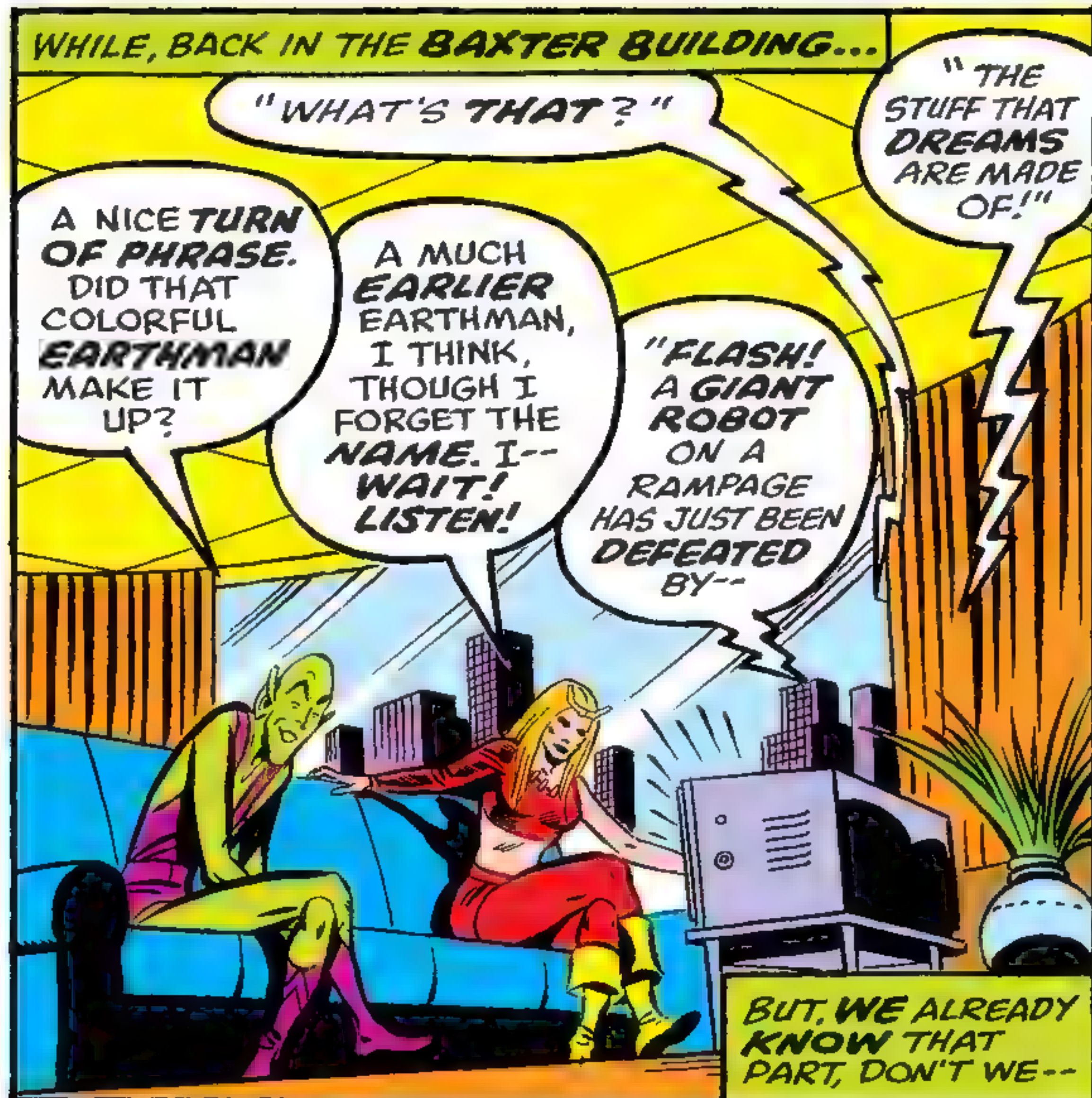
I SEE. NOW, UH-- MR. GRIMM--IF WE COULD ASK YOU ONE LAST **FAVOR**--!

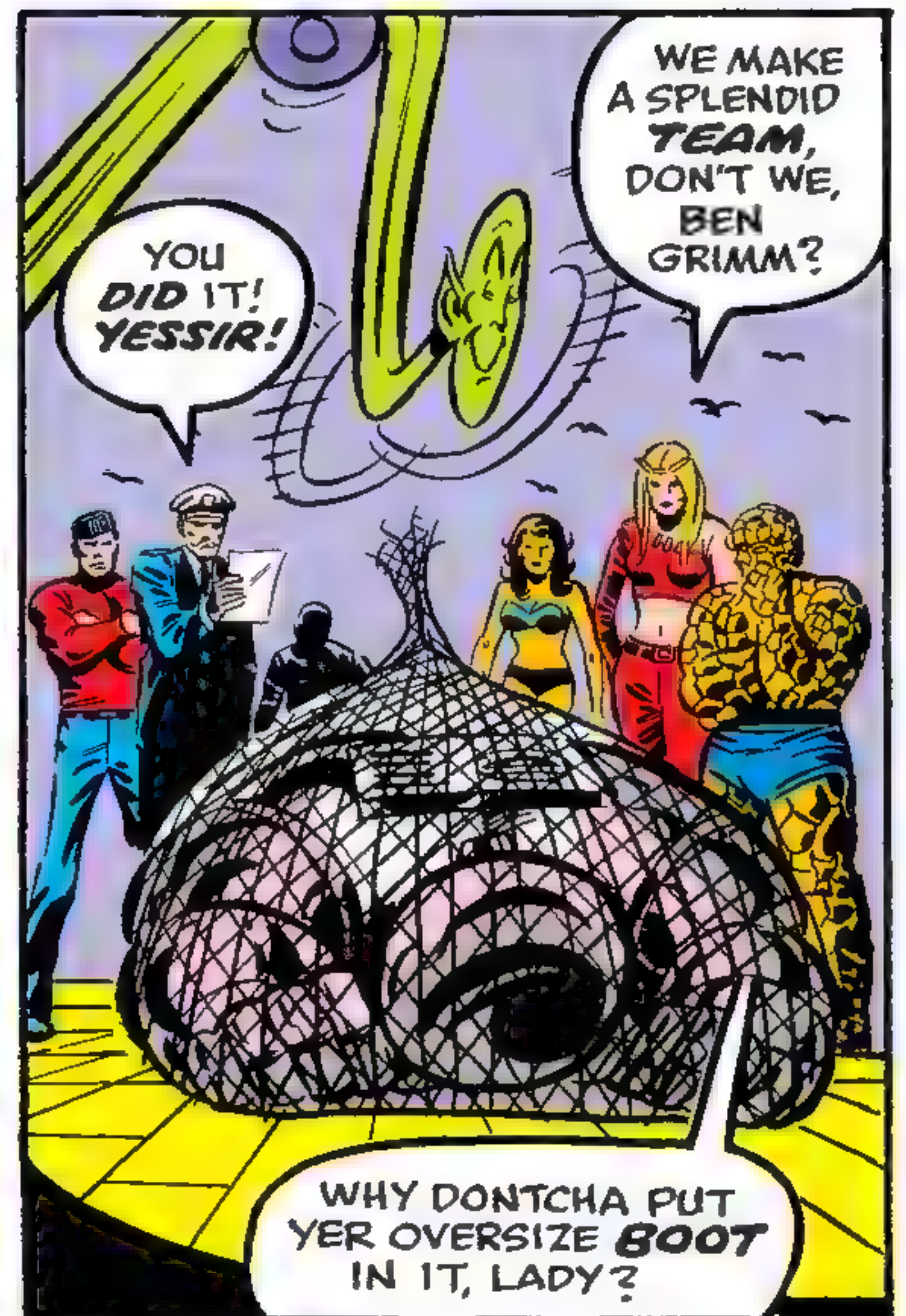
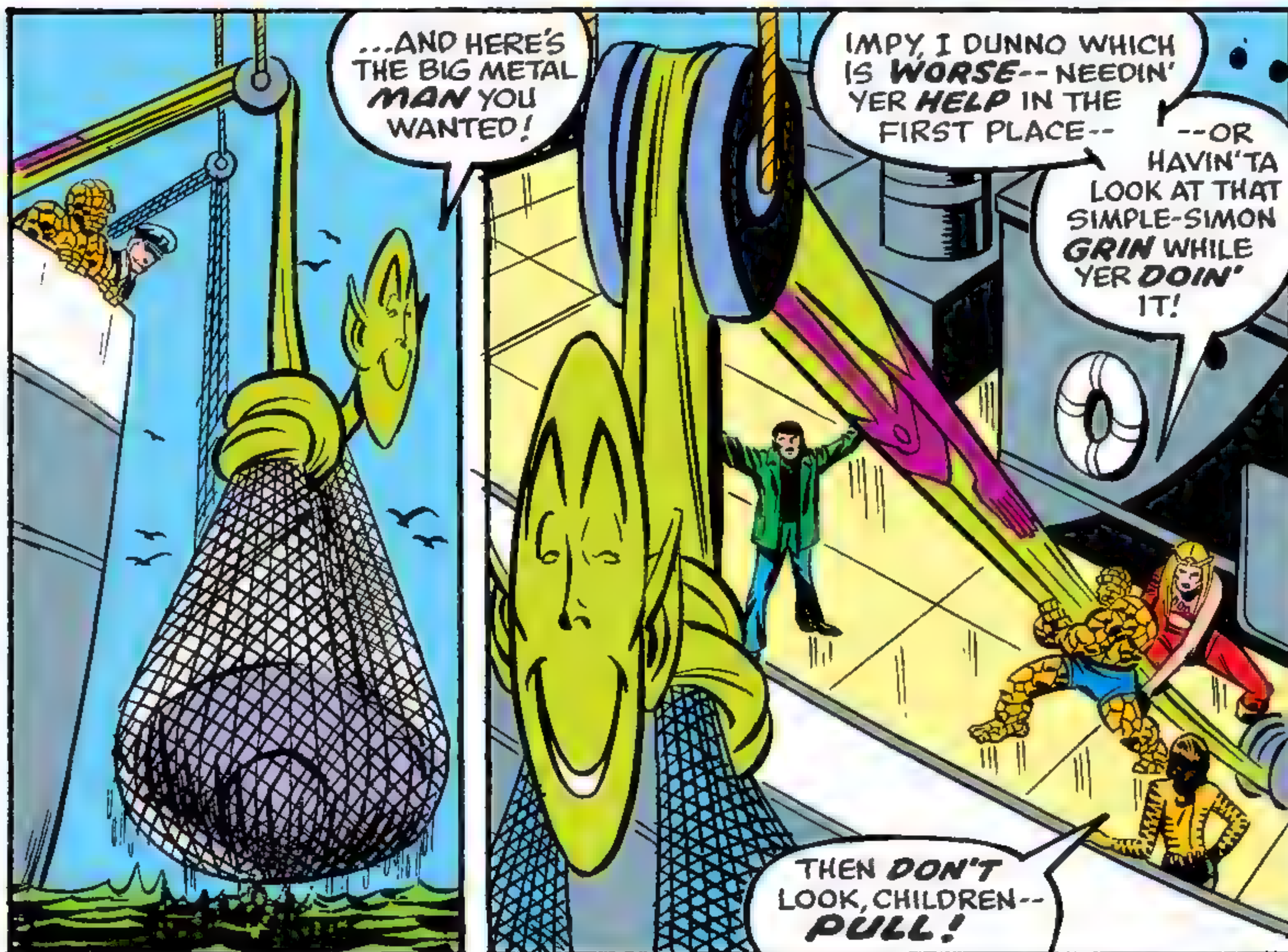
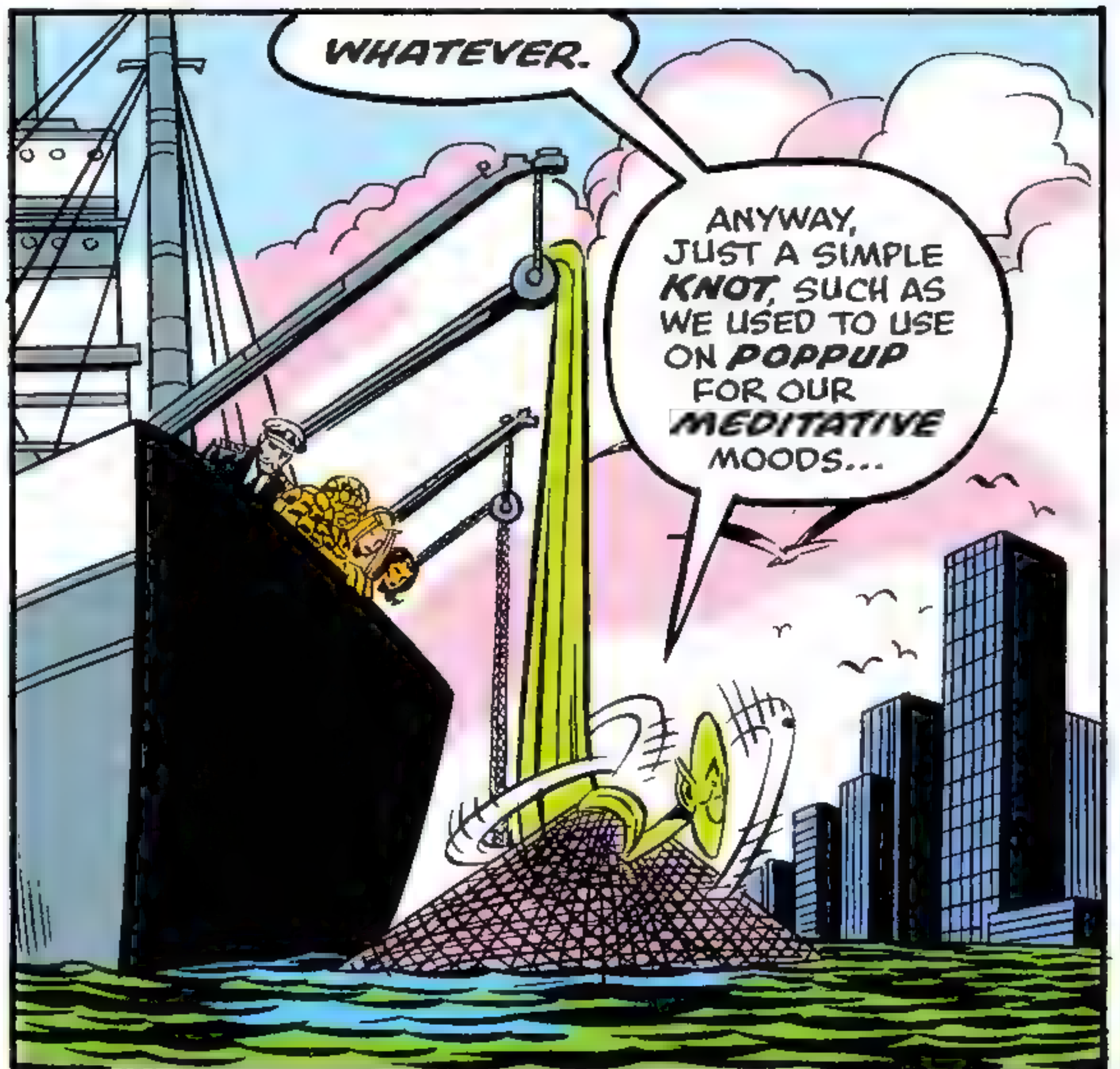
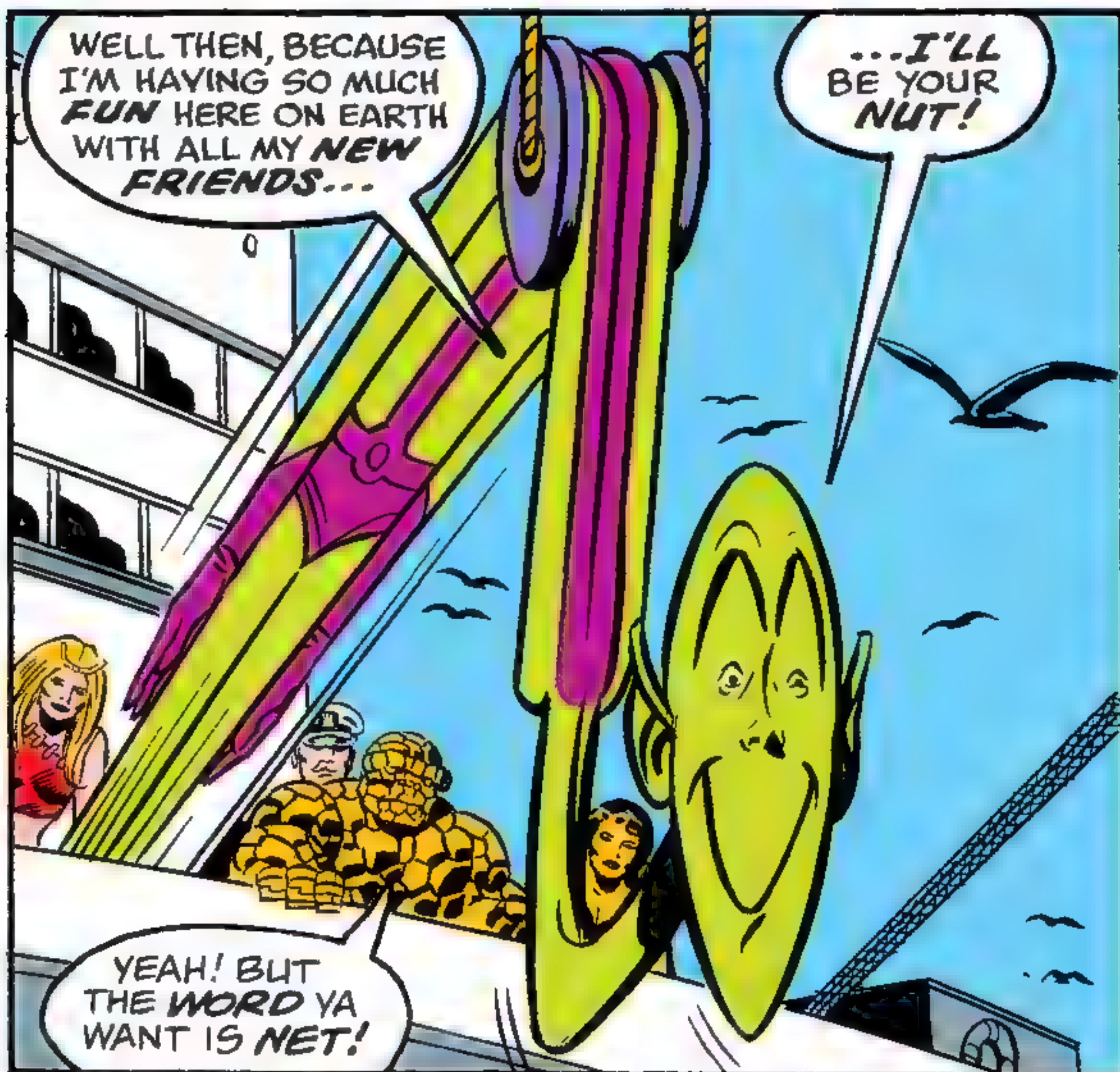
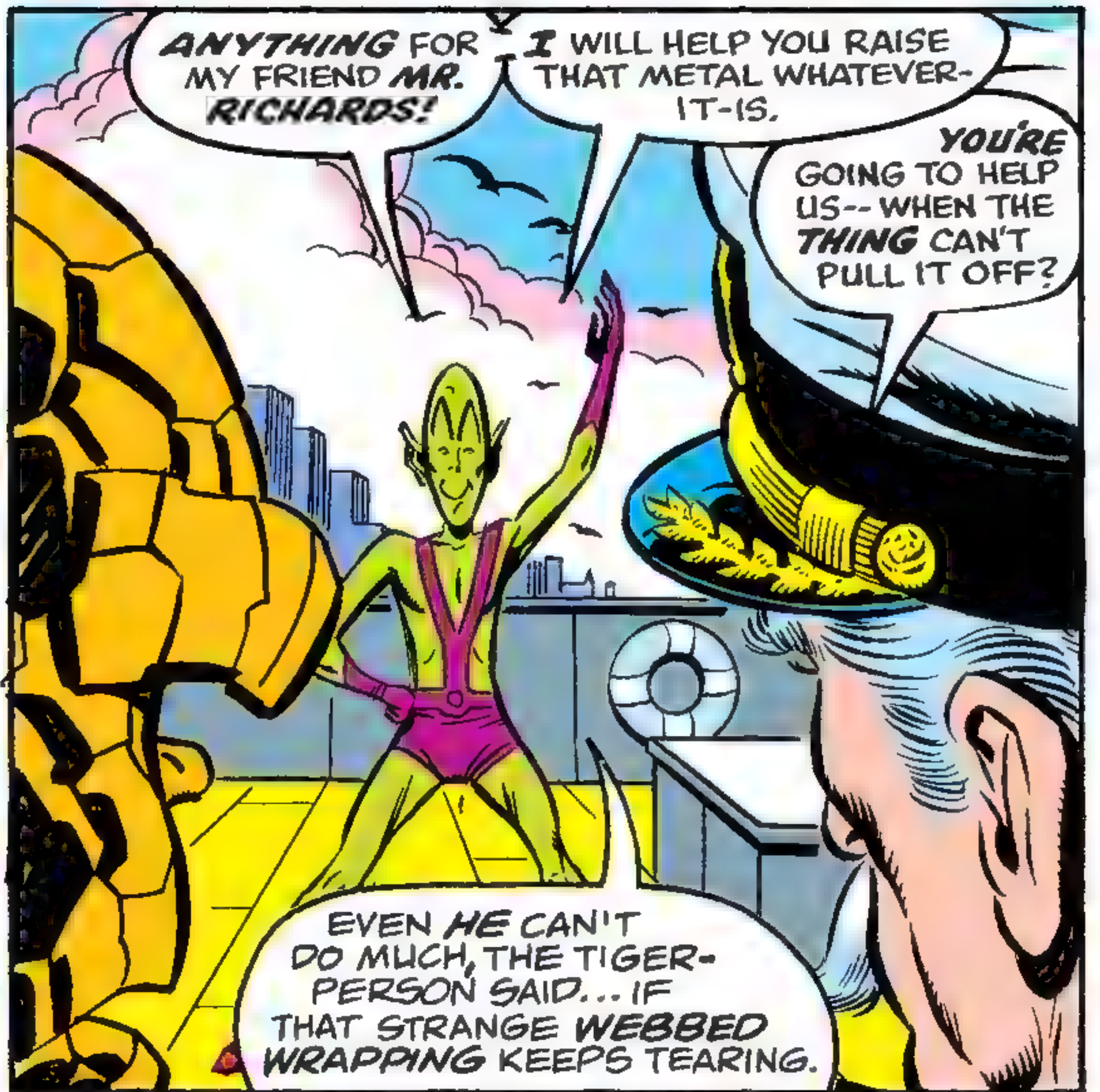
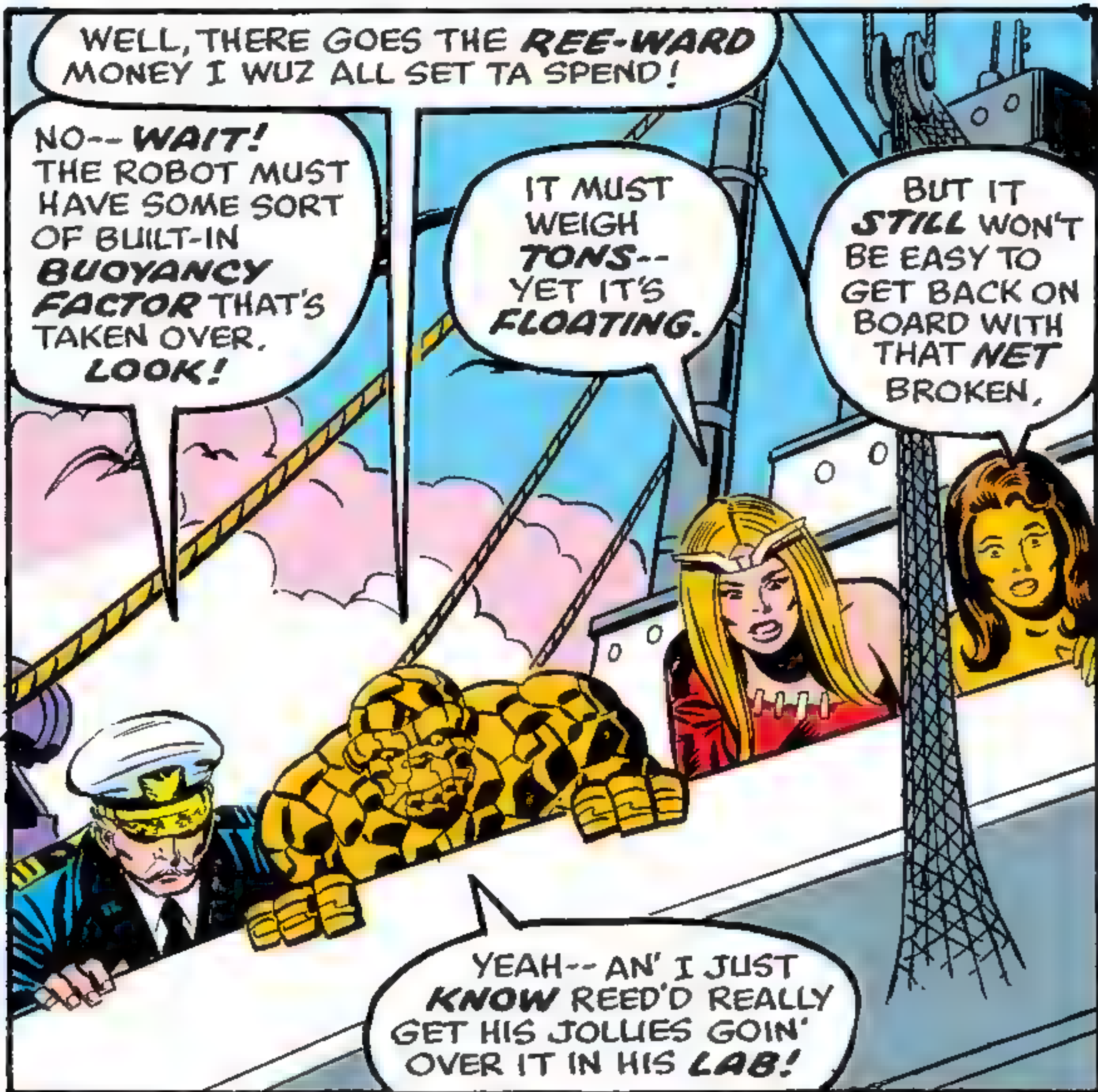


OKAY, YA LUBBERS-- **HEAVE HO!**

THE **BIG BRASS** WANTS OUR LITTLE TIN PLAYMATE **HAULED UP** FROM THE BRINY DEEP...

AN' Y'KNOW SOMETHIN'? I'M GETTIN' KINDA **CURIOUS** TO SNEAK A CLOSER PEEK AT 'I'M **MYSELF!**





AWESOME ASIDE: IF YOU'RE WONDERING *WHY* WE'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME WATCHING OUR FAR-OUT FOURSOME SIMPLY *RETRIEVE* THAT ROBOT-- WELL, AFRAID YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO GO ON PONDERING IT A WEE BIT *LONGER*...

FOR, MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE **BAXTER BUILDING** (OR DID WE SAY THAT ALREADY?)...

I CAN'T STAND THIS **TORMENT** ANY LONGER!

I'VE GOT TO GO TO THE **NEGATIVE ZONE OBSERVATORY**, TO CHECK OUT--

WHERE ARE YOU GOING??

WHAT? WHO--?

REED! I-- I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS *YOU*, DARLING.

I WAS GETTING UP TO GRAB A BREATH OF **FRESH AIR**.

SORRY I'VE BEEN SO **RESTLESS** ALL EVENING.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'VE BEEN UPSET *MYSELF*, I GUESS-- THE BATTLE WITH THE **FRIGHTFUL FOUR** AND ALL.

I THOUGHT I'D GET A GLASS OF **MILK**.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO **DISTURB** YOU.

YOU *DIDN'T*, MY DEAR. I'VE SIMPLY BEEN **WORRIED**, THAT'S ALL...

...WORRIED THAT *YOU* MIGHT TAKE MY **LOSS OF SUPER-POWERS** WORSE THAN I'M TAKING IT *MYSELF*.

I... KNOW YOU'LL **WORK IT OUT**, REED.

YOU'VE ALWAYS COME UP WITH SOMETHING **BEFORE**.

YES... I GUESS I **HAVE**.

BUT, IF I *DIDN'T*-- WOULD YOU STILL **LOVE** ME AS MUCH AS *EVER*?

OH, REED-- HOW CAN YOU EVEN **ASK** ME A QUESTION LIKE THAT?

JUST **KISS** ME-- PLEASE-- **HOLD** ME--!

AND KISS THEY **DO**... BECAUSE EVEN *THIS* REED RICHARDS IS ONLY **HUMAN**, AFTER ALL...

BUT, EVEN AS THE LOVERS' TABLEAU IS **BROKEN**...

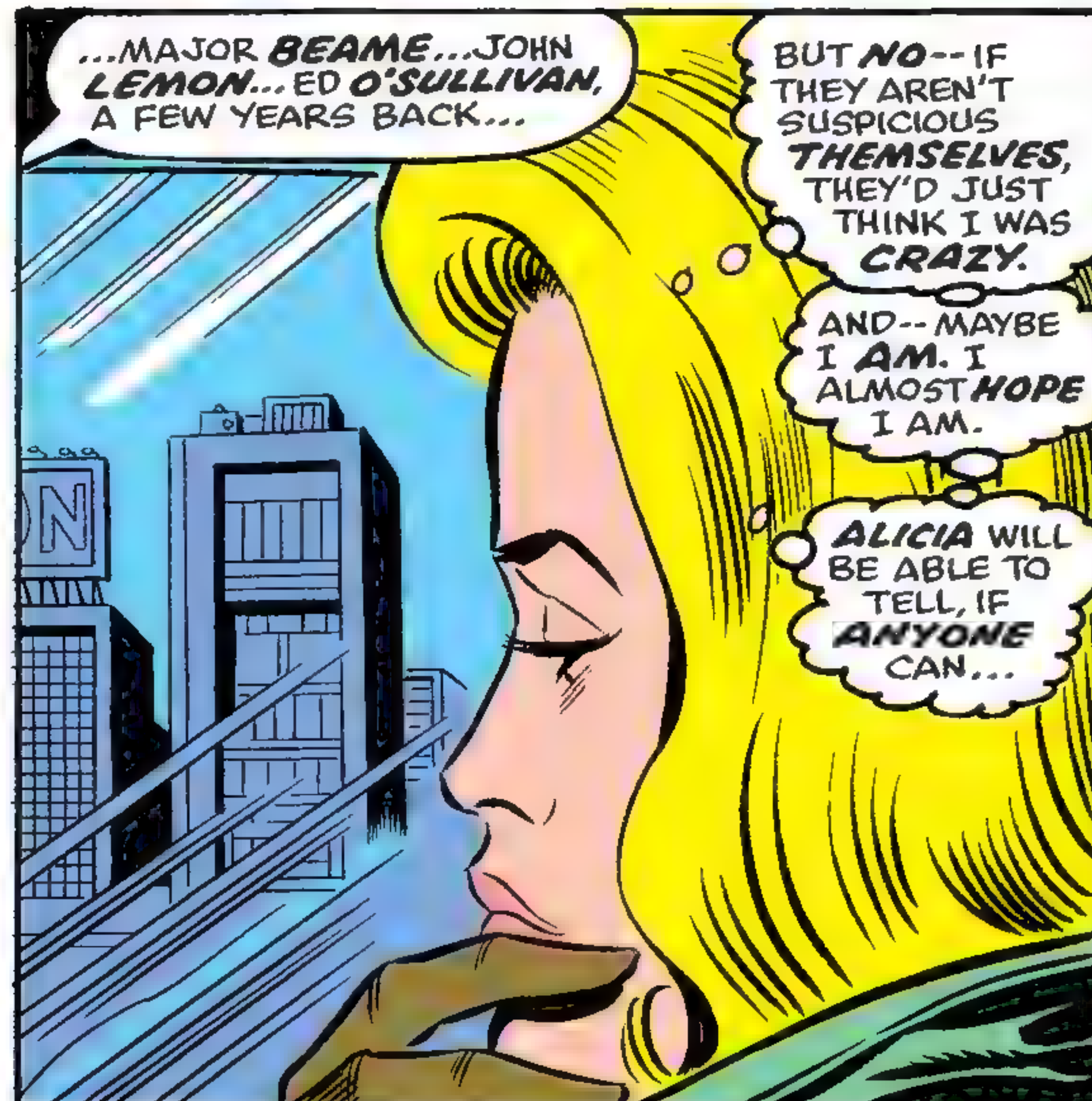
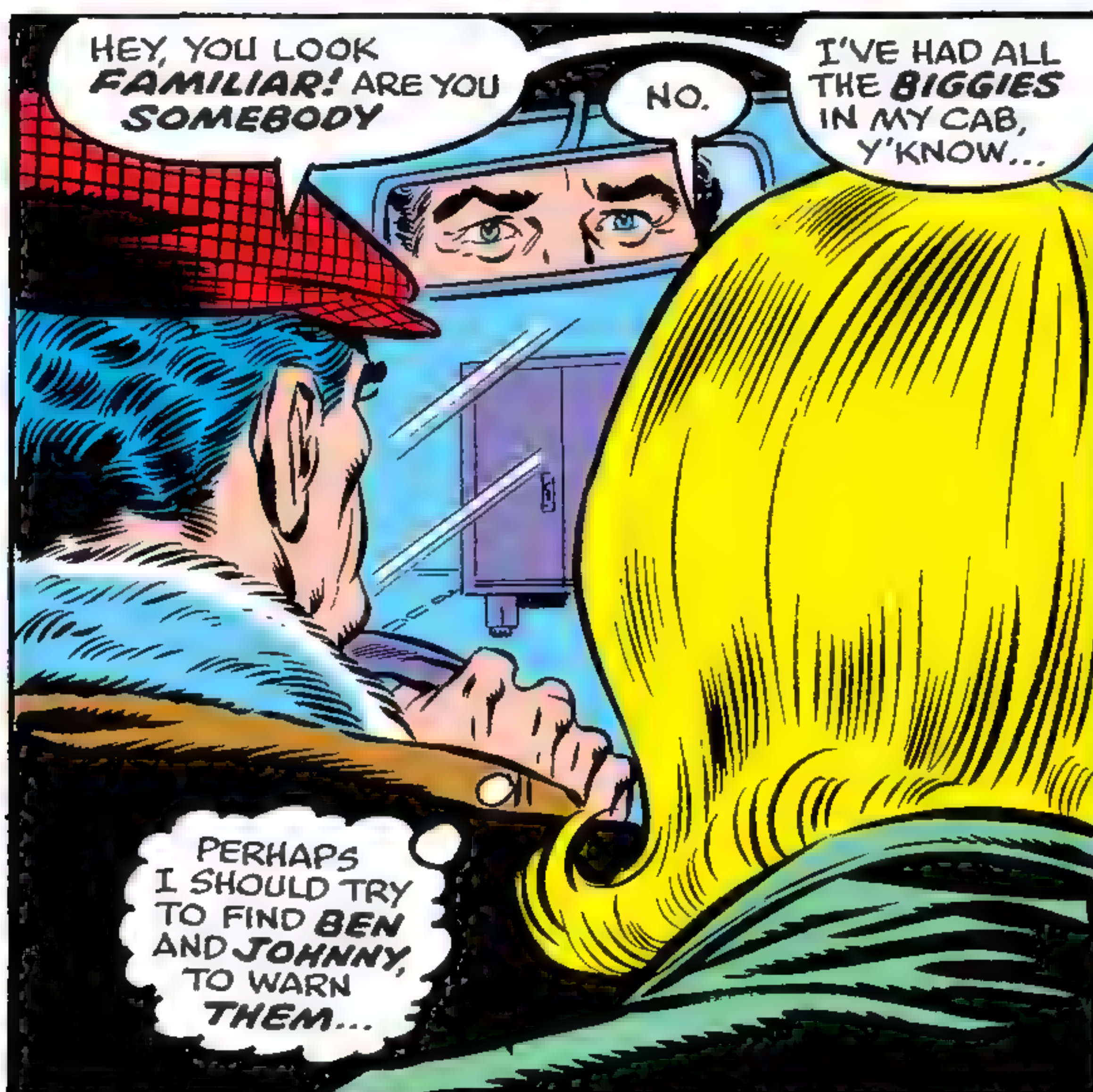
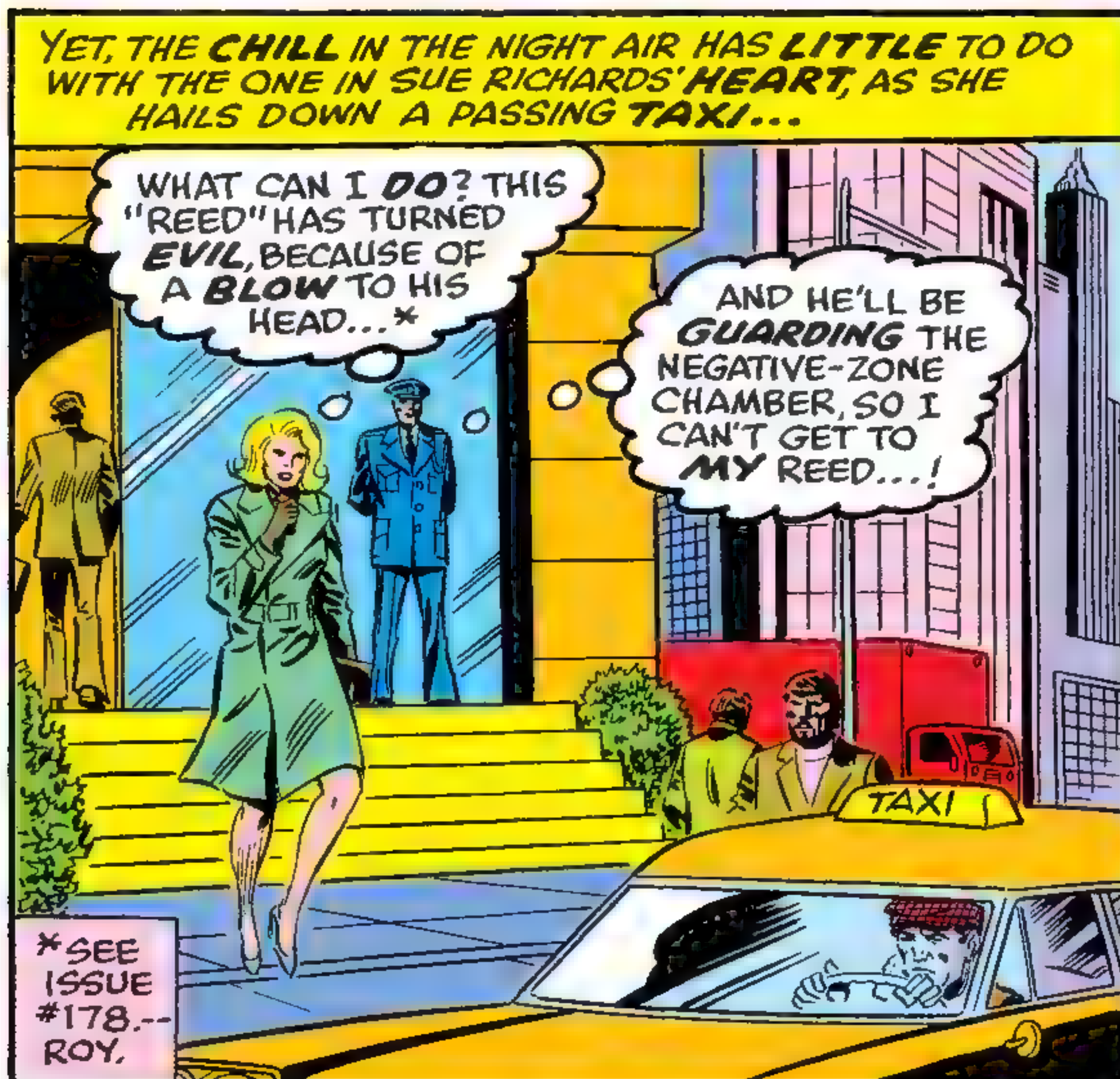
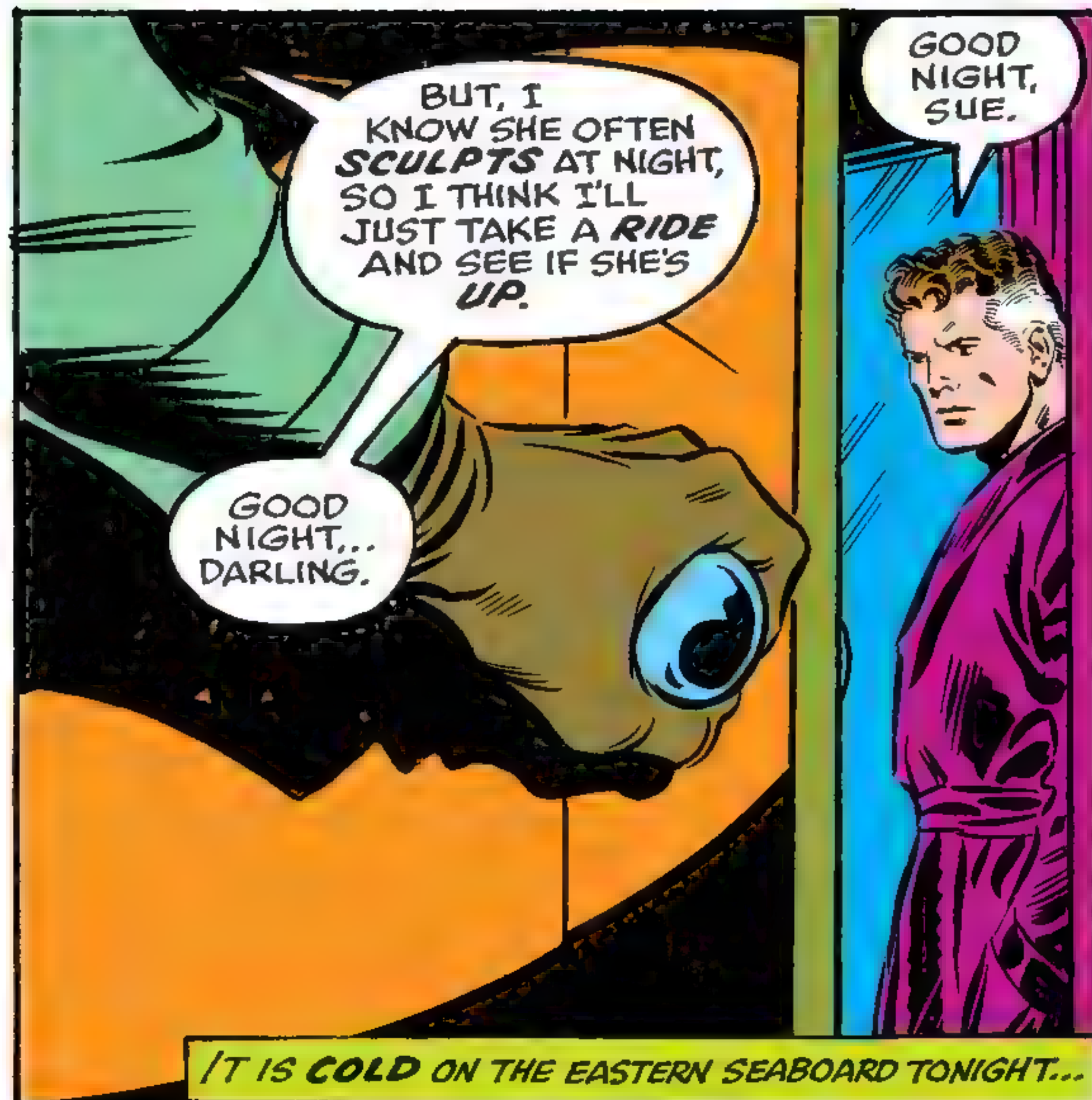
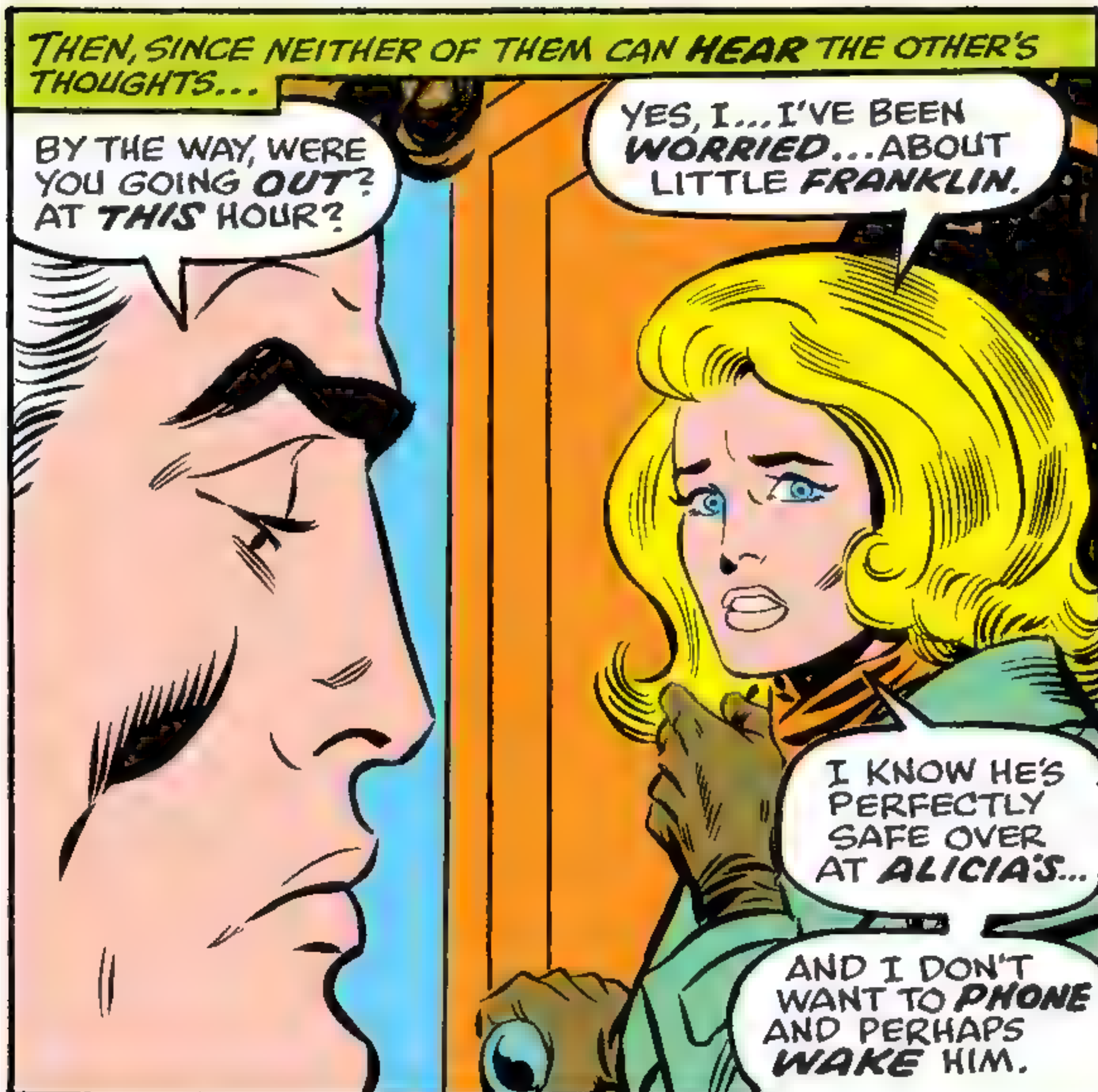
THAT KISS **CONVINCED** ME!

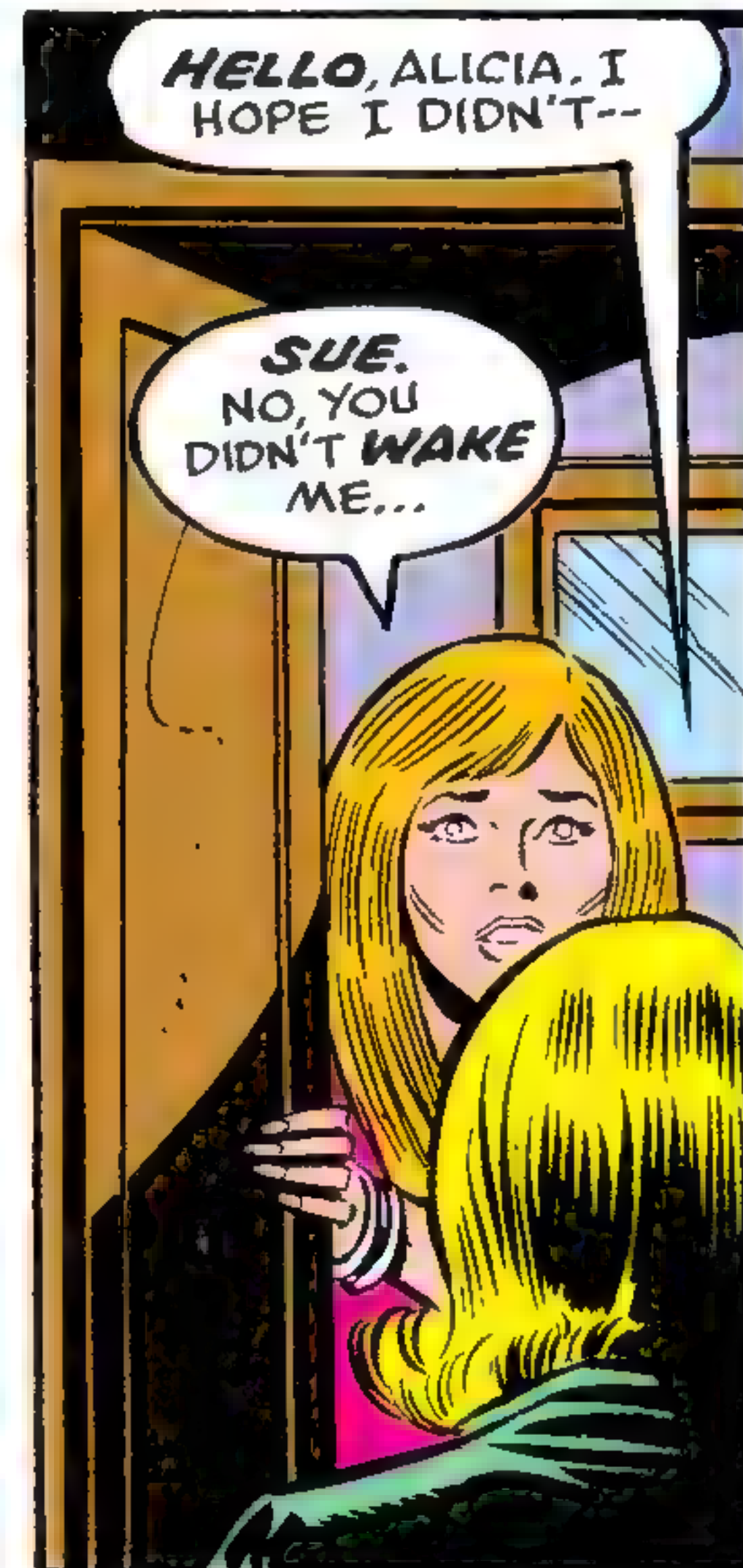
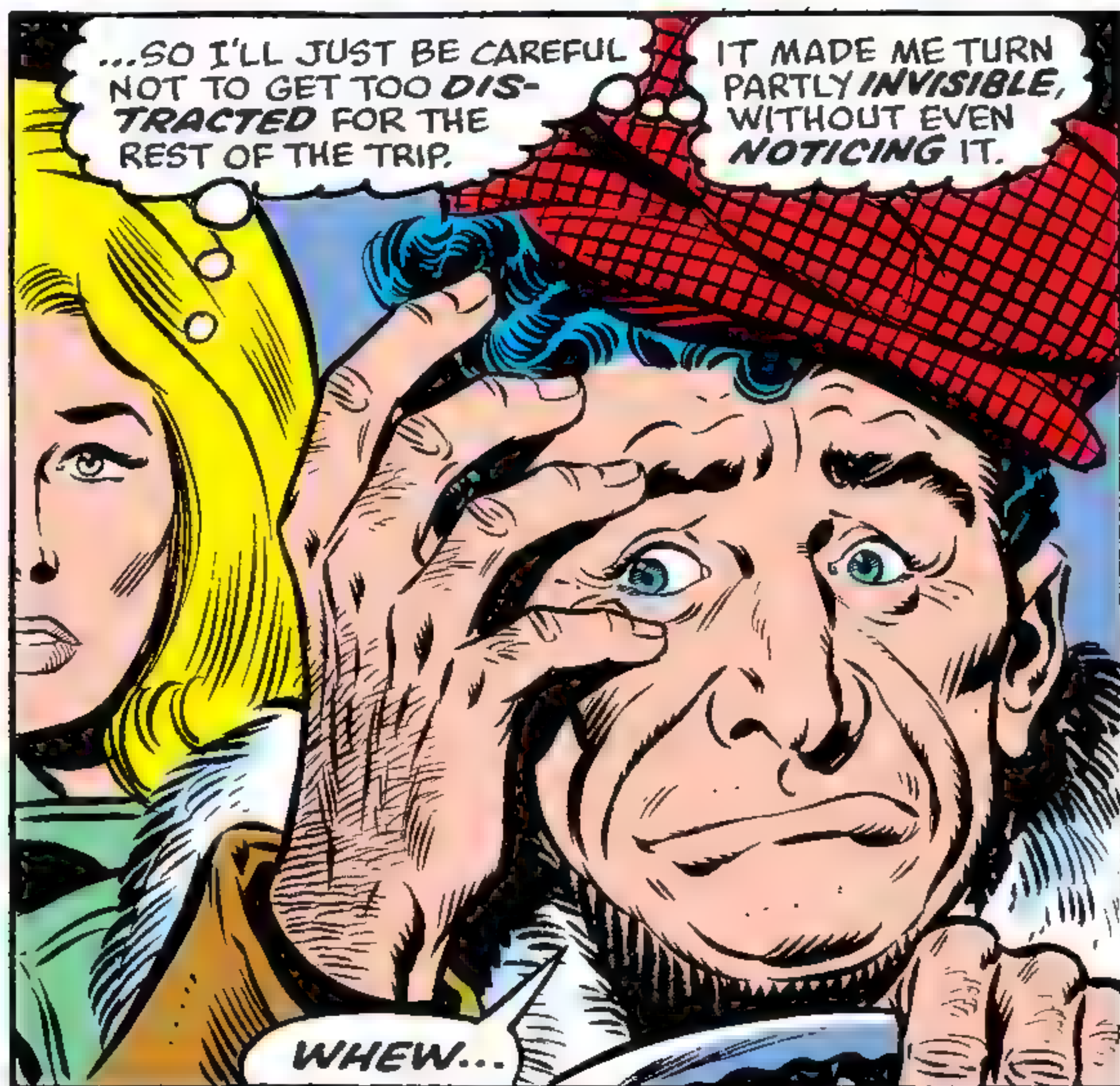
THIS *ISN'T* MY HUSBAND HOLDING ME IN HIS ARMS-- BUT THE **EVIL** REED RICHARDS OF **COUNTER-EARTH**!

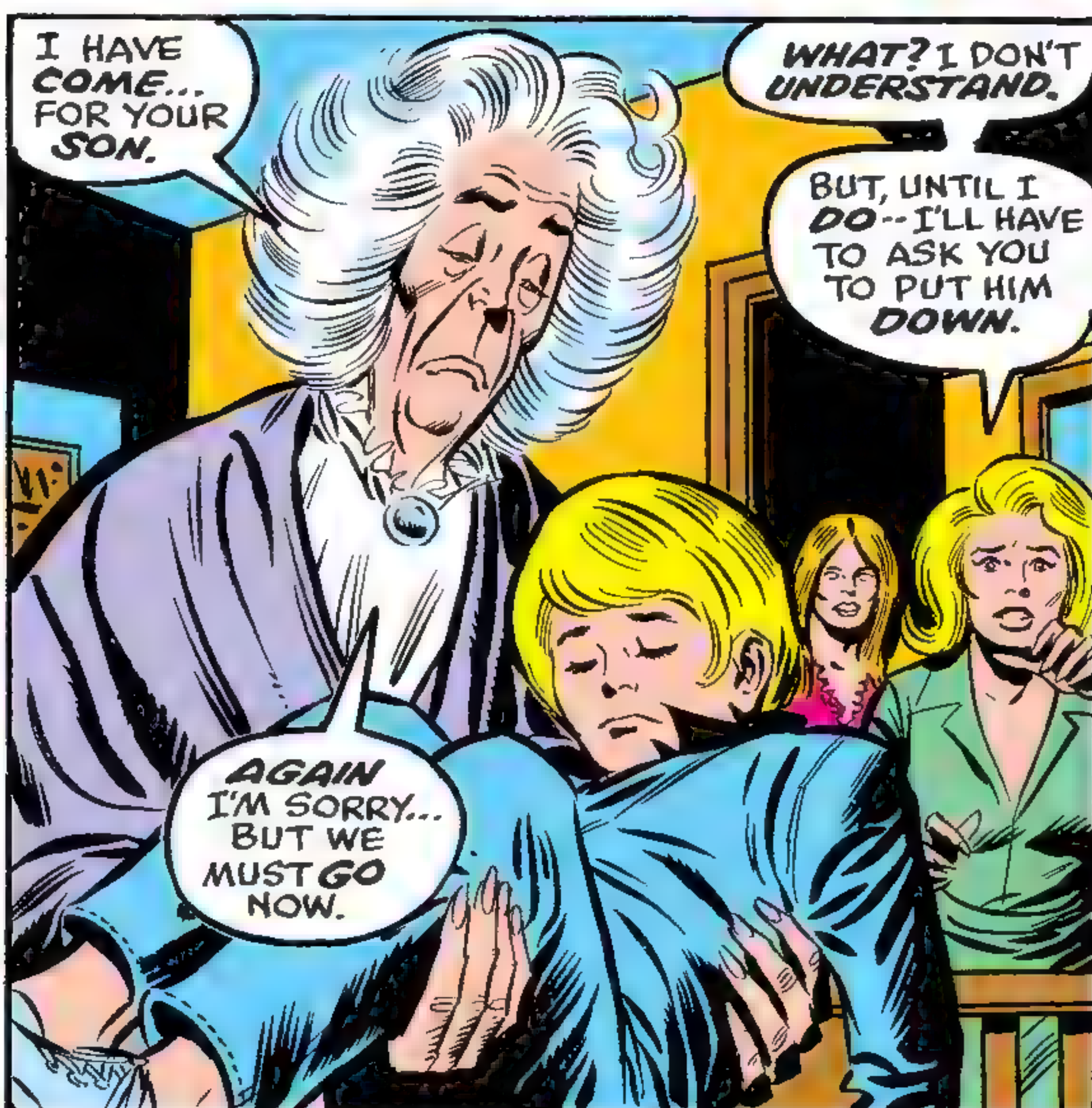
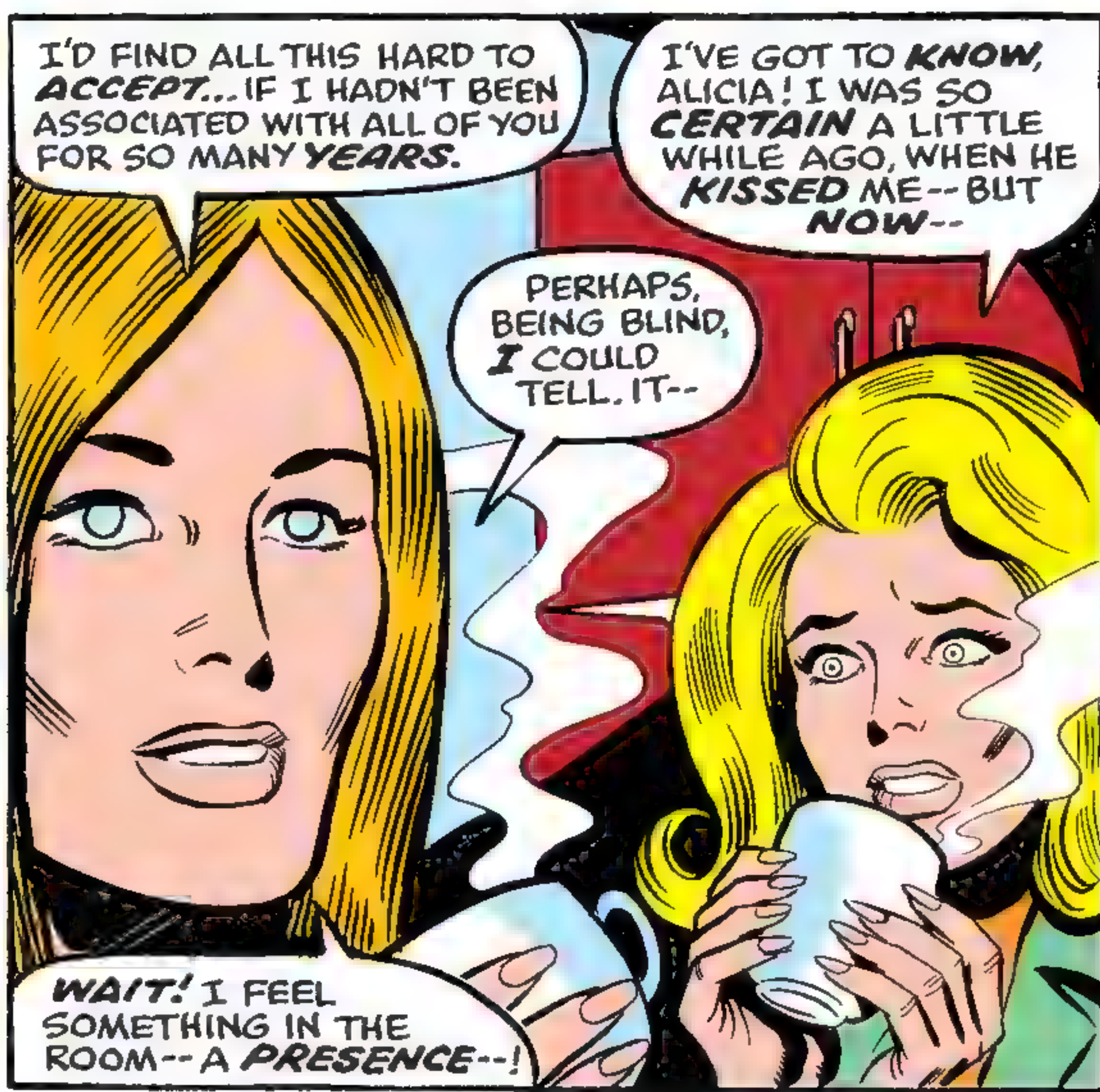
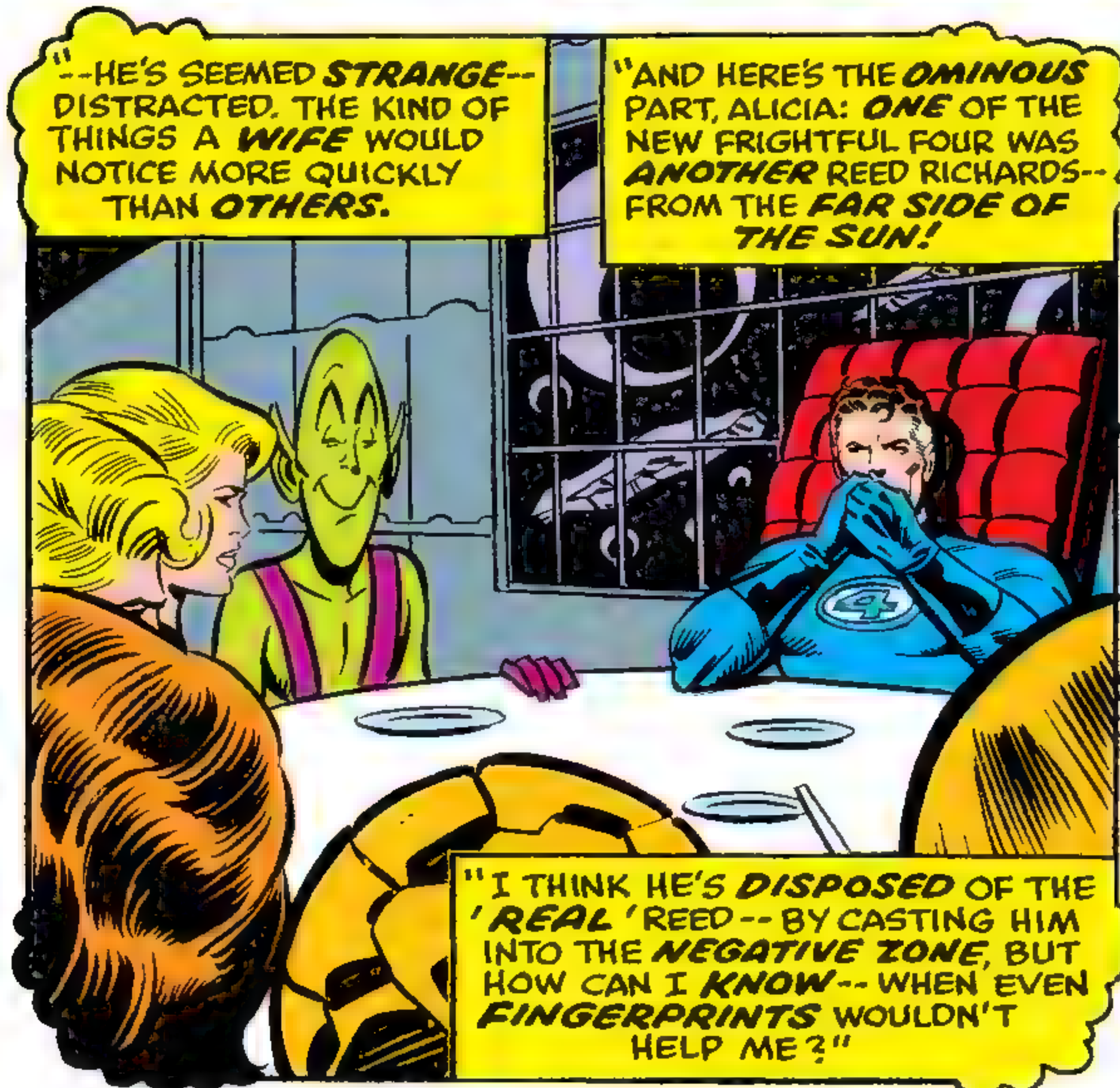
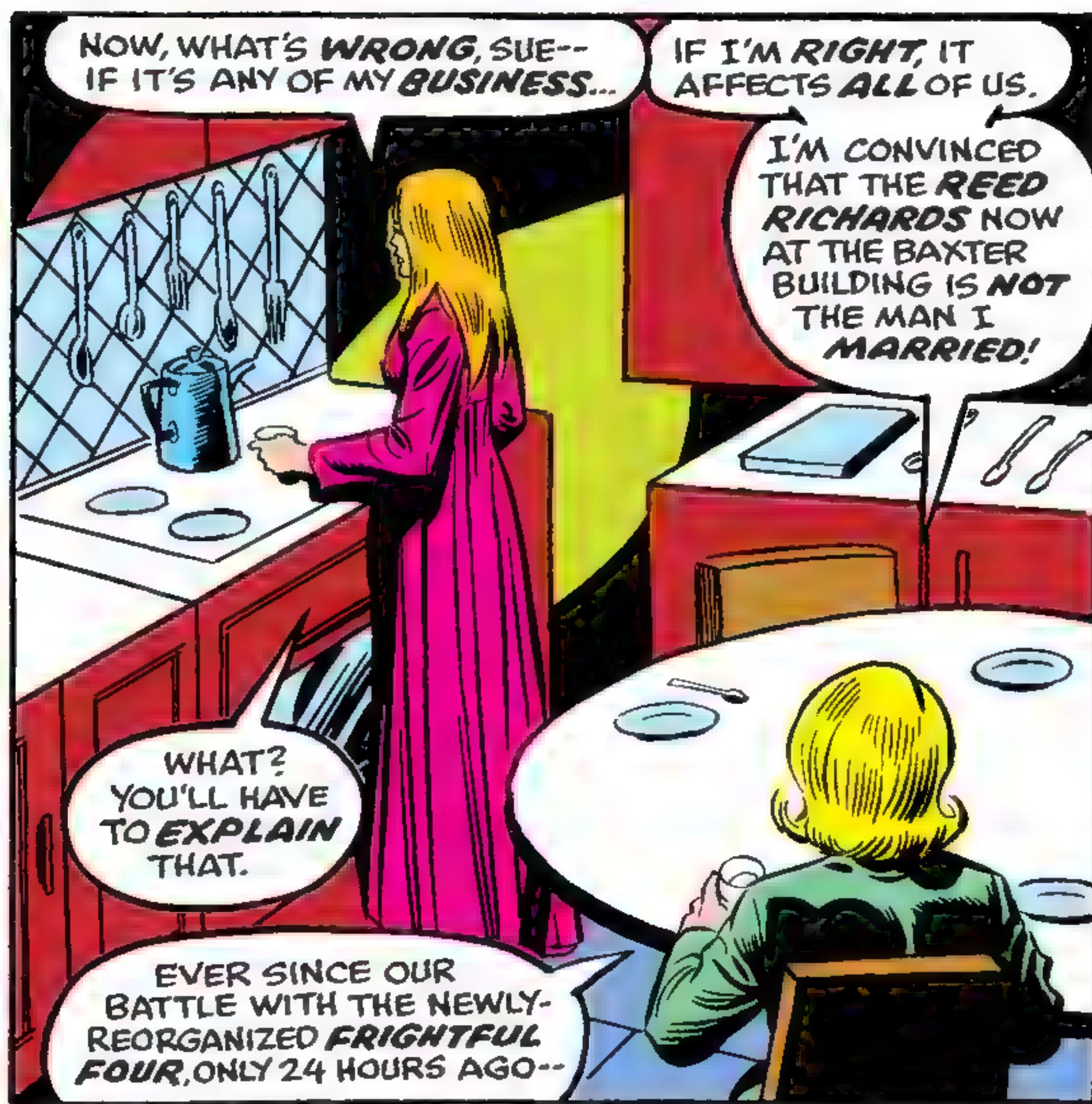
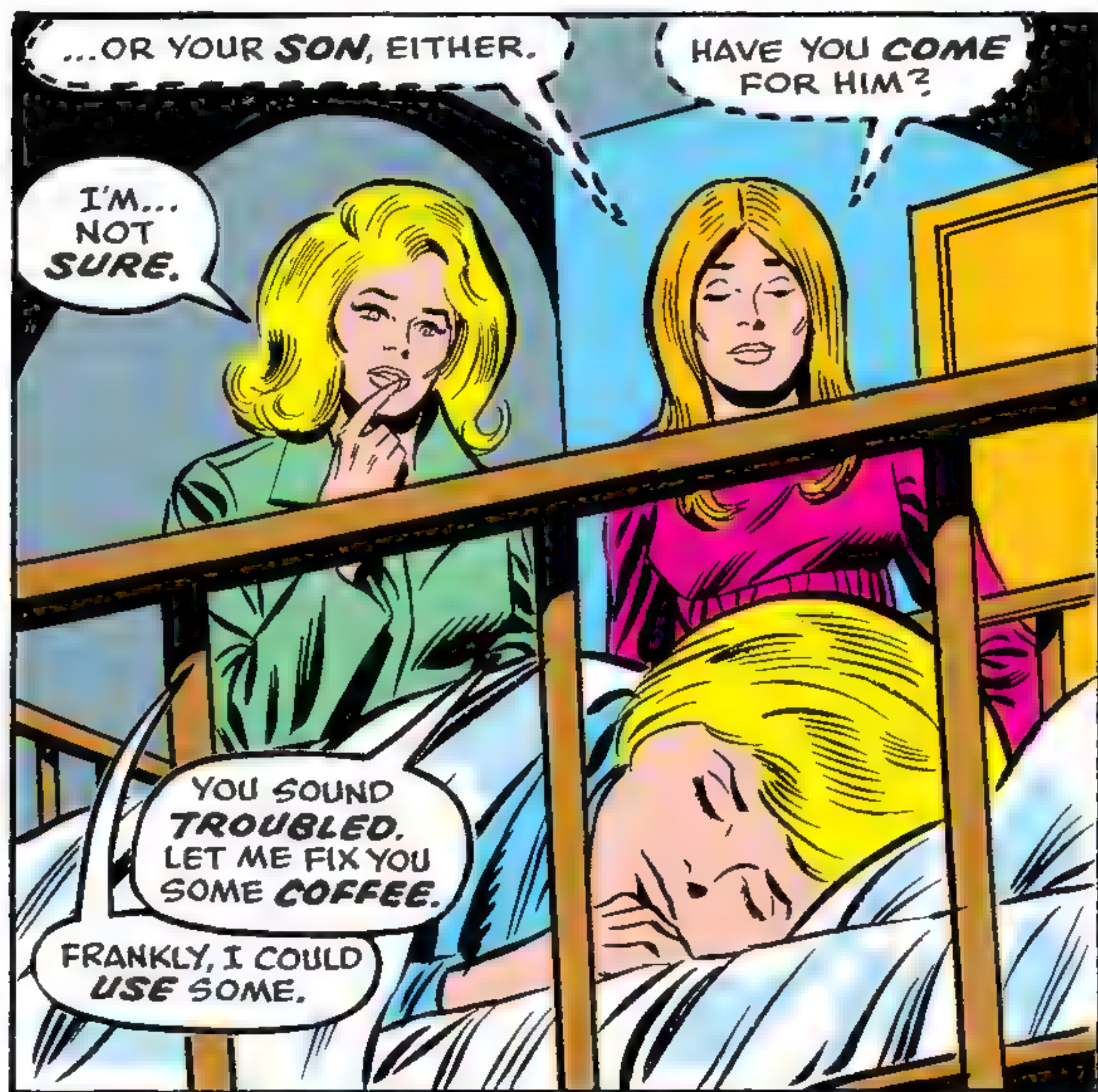
MUST KEEP HIM FROM **REALIZING** I KNOW-- TILL I HAVE TIME TO **THINK**!

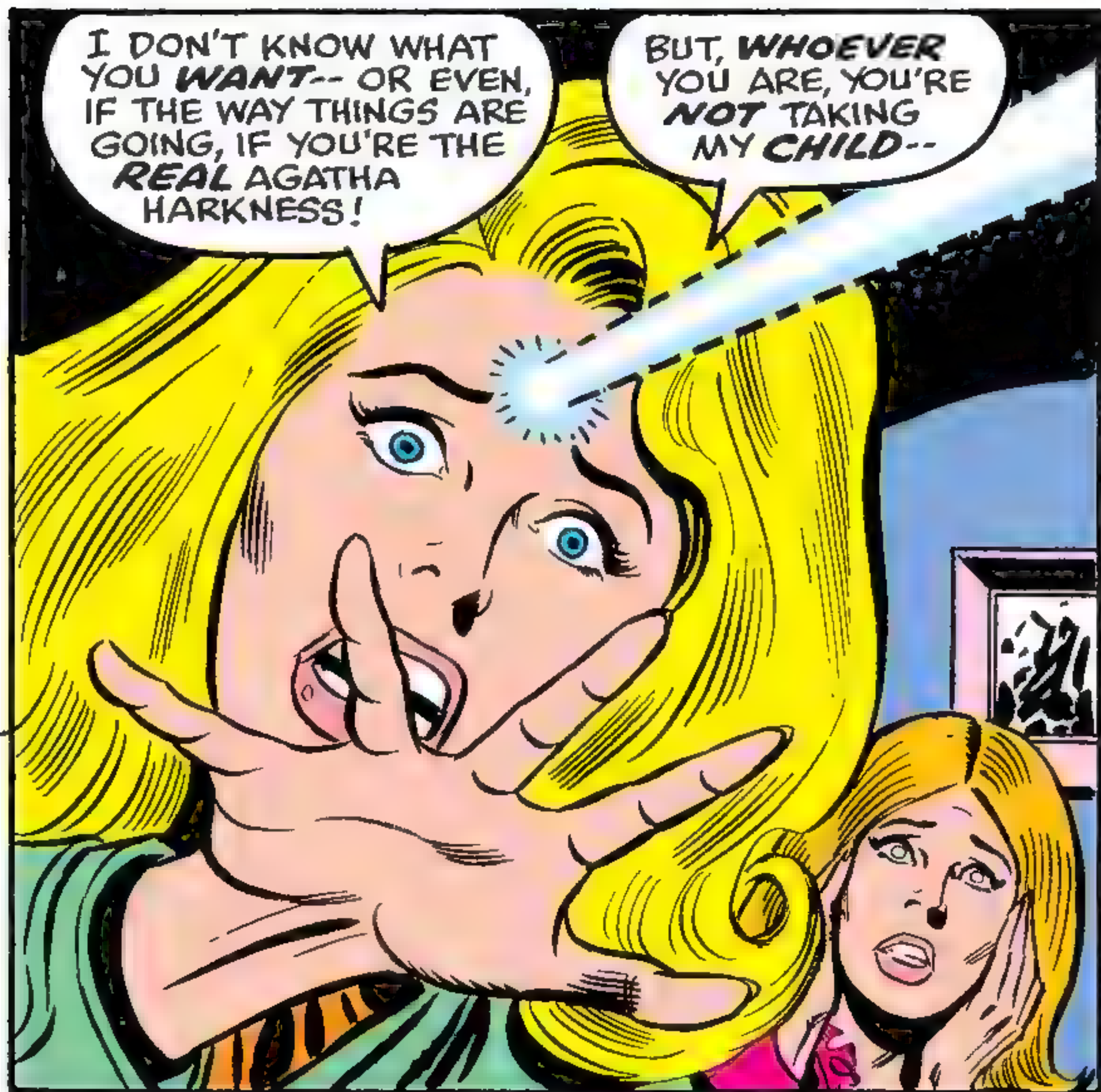
SHE'S **SUSPICIOUS**! WHICH MEANS THAT, MUCH AS I MAY **REGRET** IT--

SHE MUST **DIE**-- JUST LIKE THE **OTHERS**!



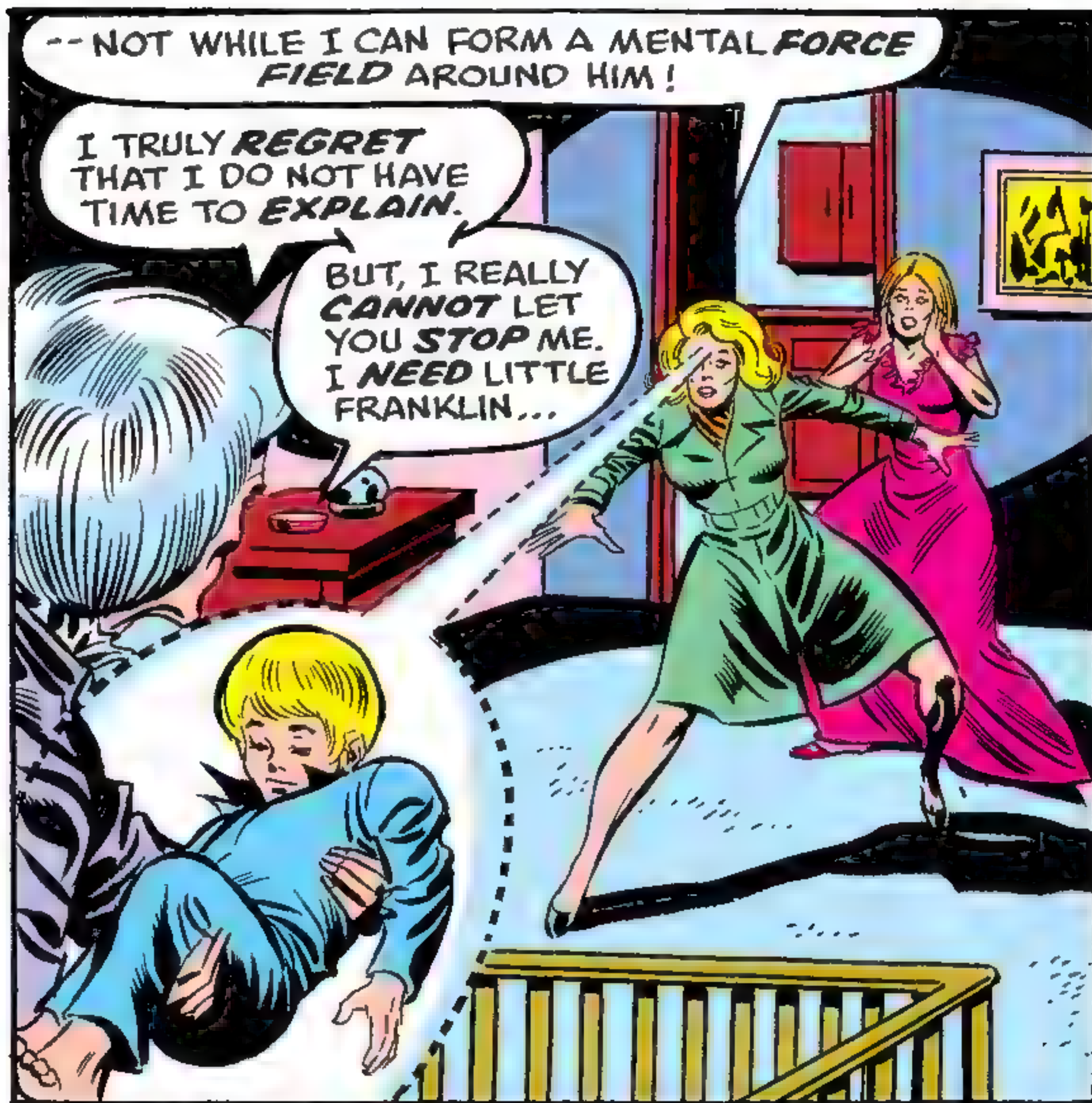






I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU *WANT*-- OR EVEN, IF THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, IF YOU'RE THE *REAL* AGATHA HARKNESS!

BUT, *WHOEVER* YOU ARE, YOU'RE *NOT* TAKING MY *CHILD*--



-- NOT WHILE I CAN FORM A MENTAL *FORCE FIELD* AROUND HIM!

I TRULY *REGRET* THAT I DO NOT HAVE TIME TO *EXPLAIN*.

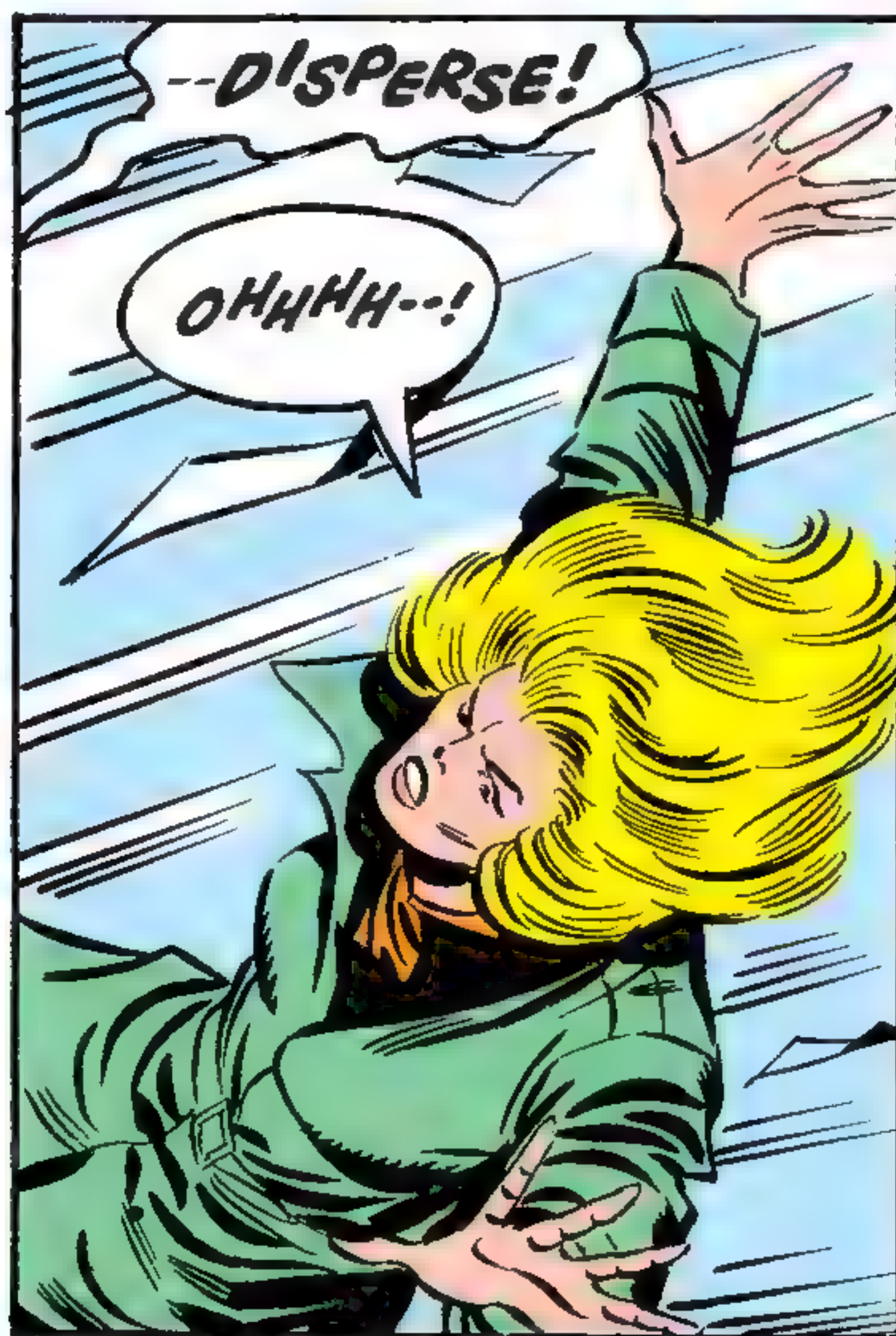
BUT, I REALLY *CANNOT* LET YOU *STOP* ME. I *NEED* LITTLE FRANKLIN...



THEREFORE:

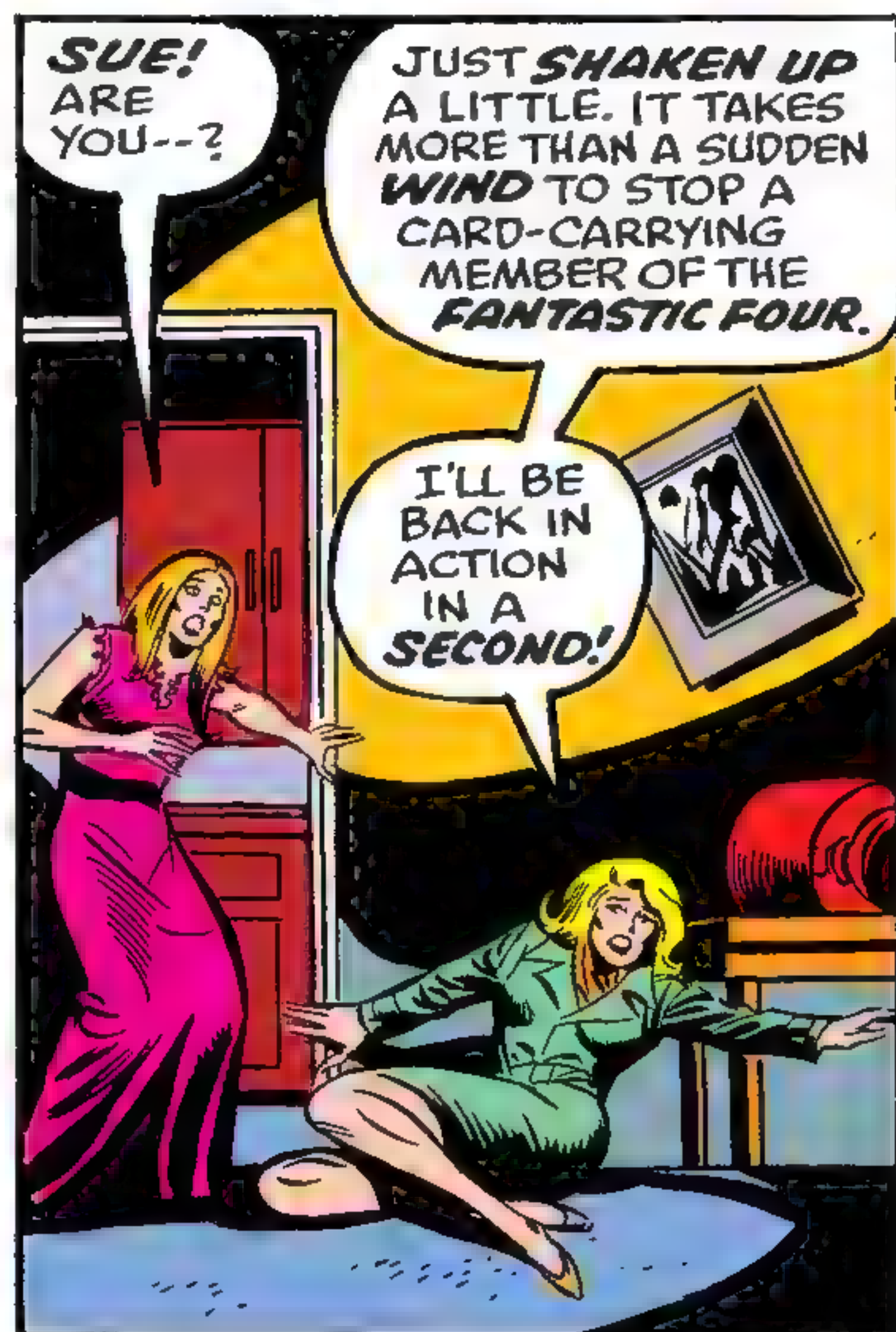
POWER OF *SCIENCE* CANNOT STAND WHEN A *SORCERESS* PLIES HER HAND...

WARLOCK'S *MAGIC*... WITCH'S *CURSE*... LET YON *FORCE FIELD* NOW--



--*DISPERSE!*

OHhhh--!



SUE! ARE YOU--?

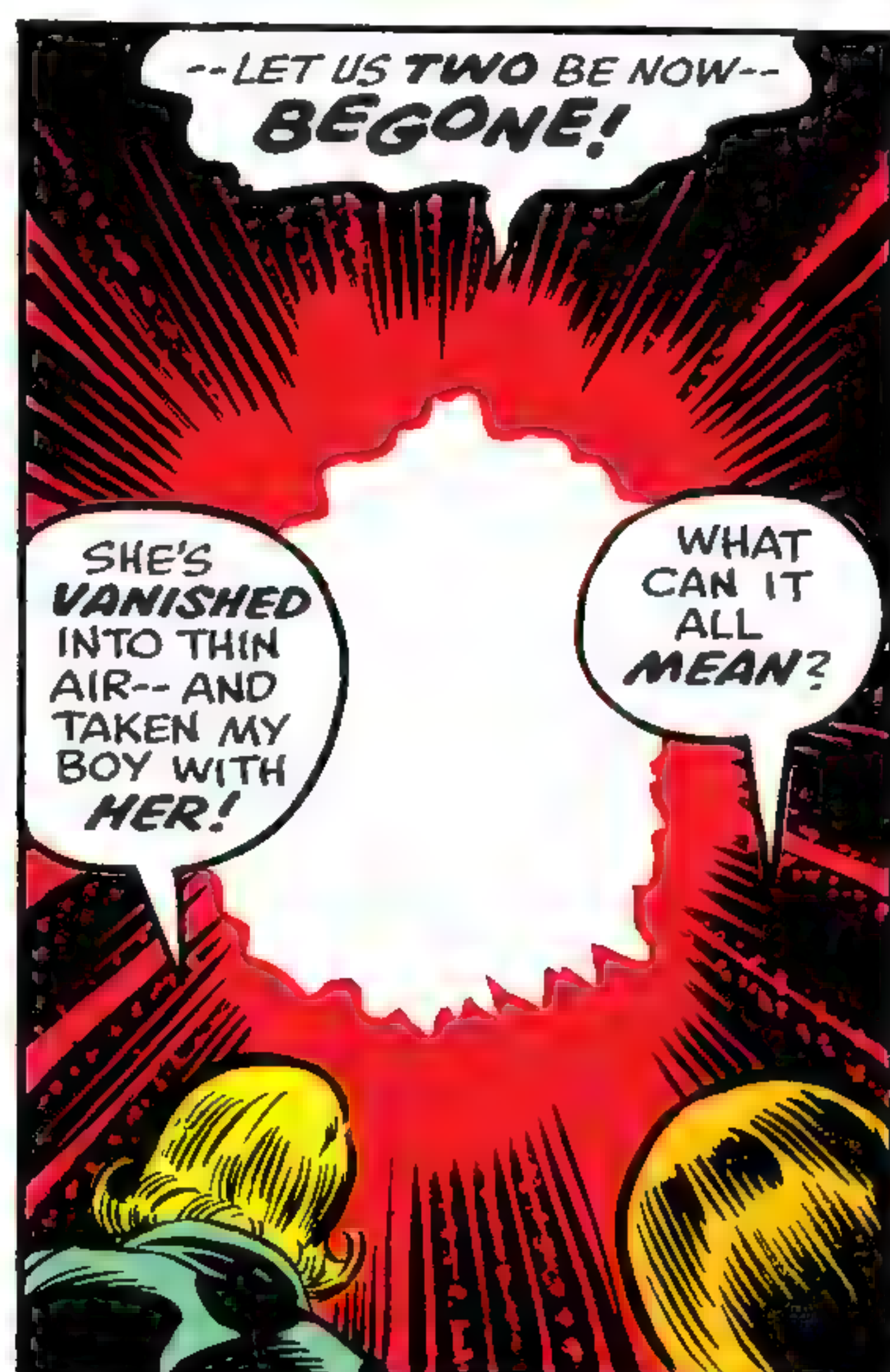
JUST *SHAKEN UP* A LITTLE. IT TAKES MORE THAN A SUDDEN *WIND* TO STOP A CARD-CARRYING MEMBER OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*.

I'LL BE BACK IN ACTION IN A *SECOND!*



AND THAT WILL BE A SECOND TOO *LATE*, MRS. RICHARDS.

ERE APPEARS THE GLOW OF *DAWN*--



--LET US *TWO* BE NOW--
BEGONE!

SHE'S *VANISHED* INTO THIN AIR-- AND TAKEN MY BOY WITH *HER!*

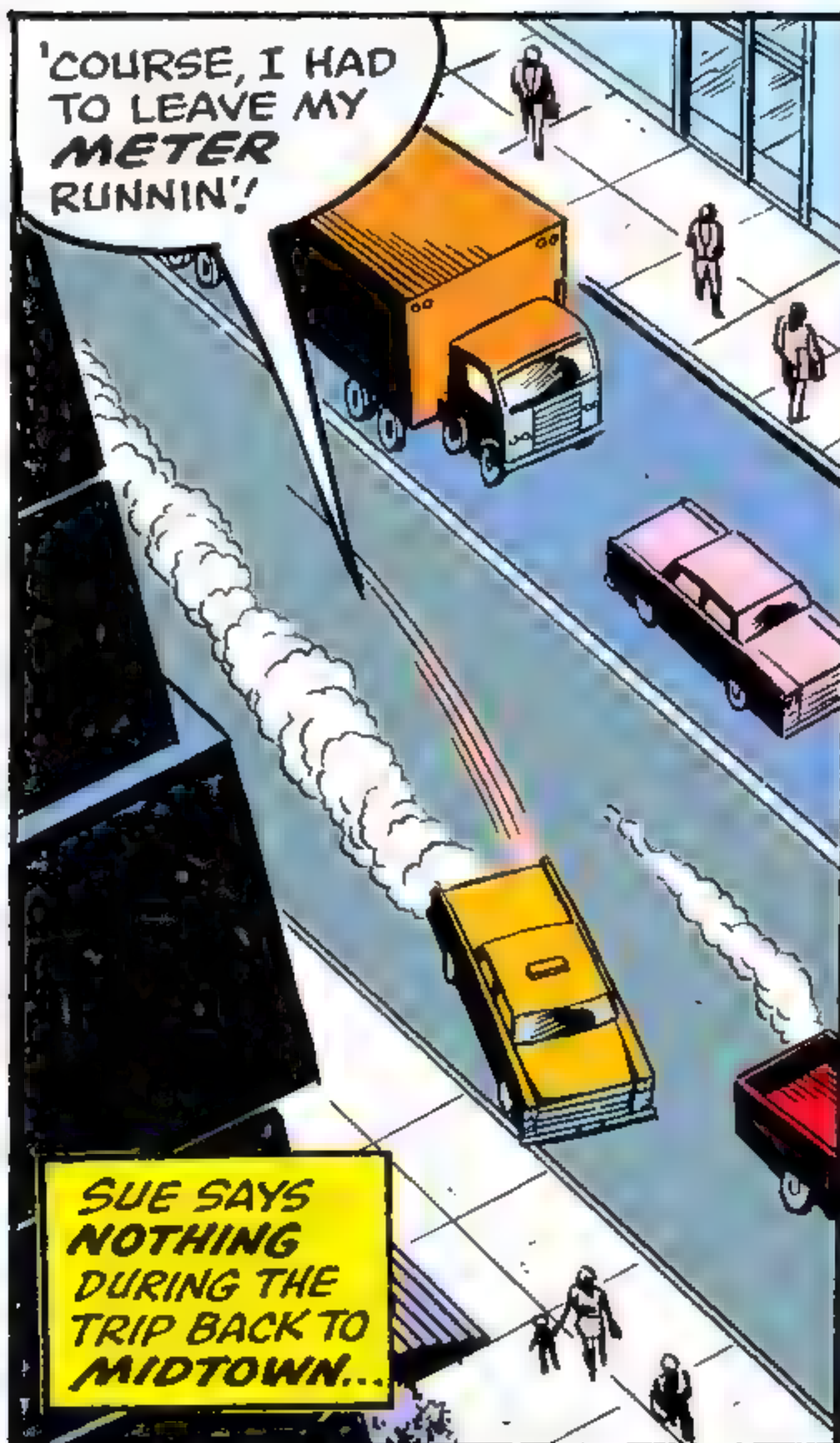
WHAT CAN IT ALL *MEAN?*



I DON'T KNOW-- BUT, AGATHA HARKNESS **LOVES** FRANKLIN. SHE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO--

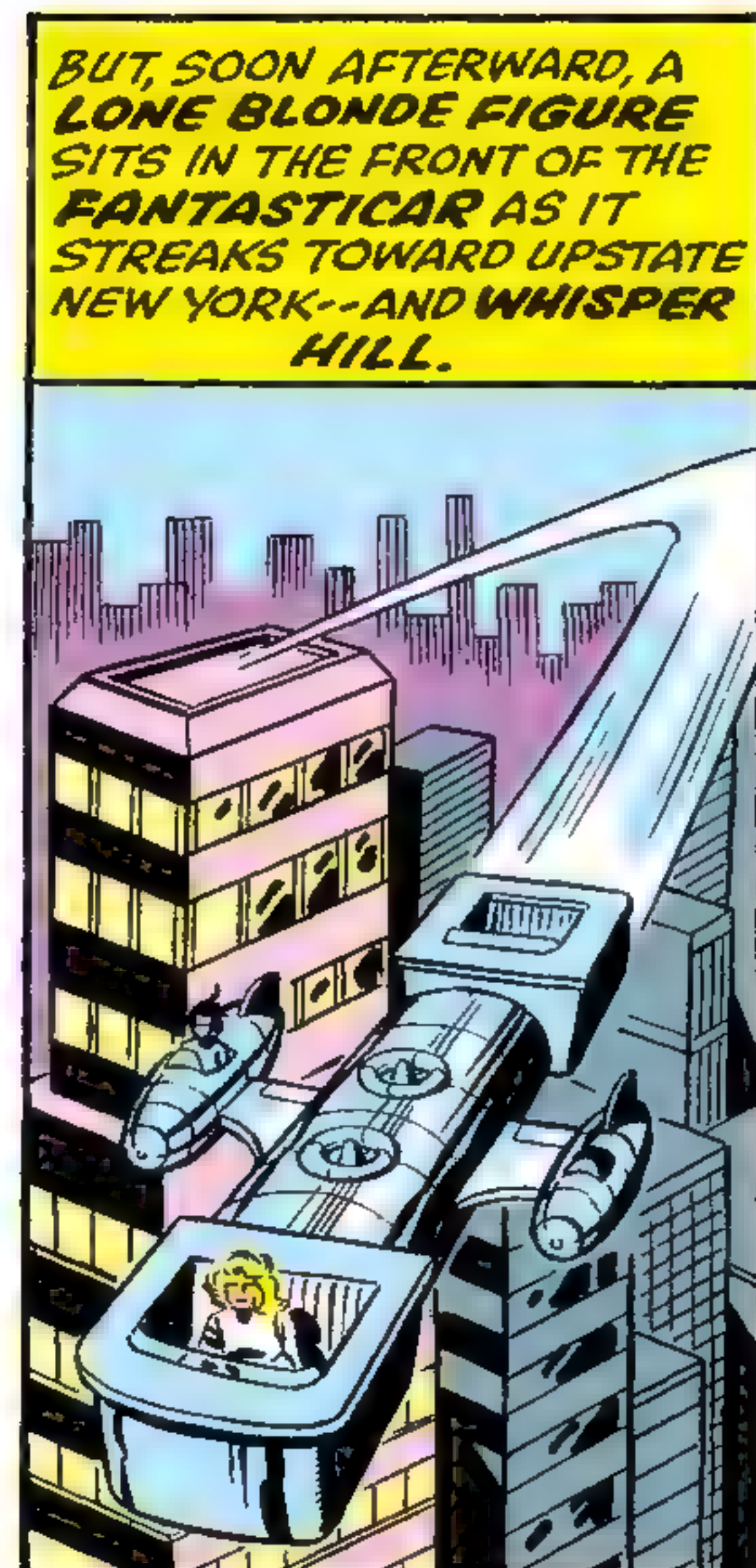
WHAT? ARE **YOU** STILL HERE?

WHEN YOU SAY **WAIT**, LADY-- I **WAIT**.

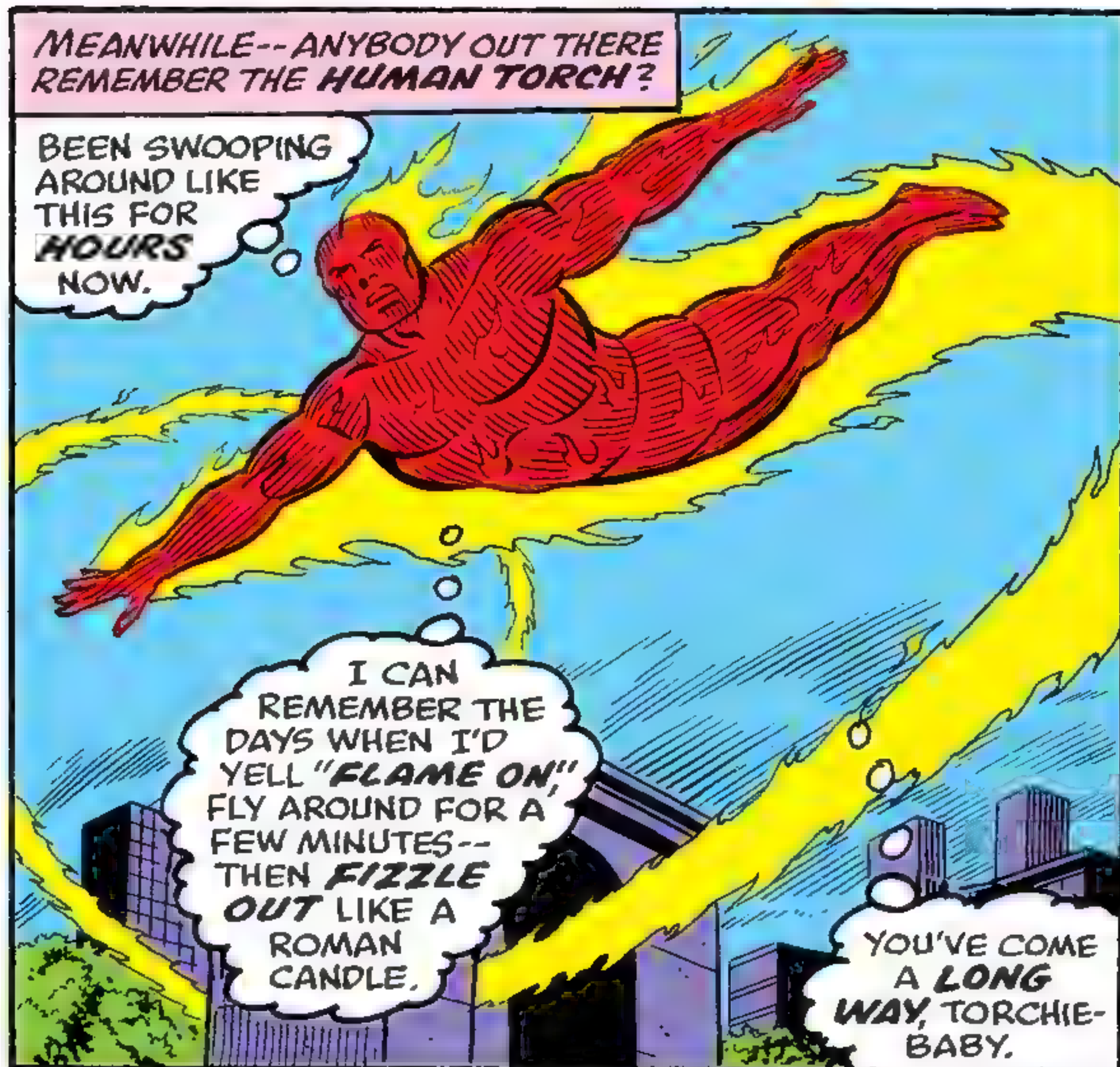


'COURSE, I HAD TO LEAVE MY **METER** RUNNIN'!

SUE SAYS **NOTHING** DURING THE TRIP BACK TO **MIDTOWN**...



BUT, SOON AFTERWARD, A **LONE BLONDE FIGURE** SITS IN THE FRONT OF THE **FANTASTICAR** AS IT **STREAKS** TOWARD UPSTATE **NEW YORK**--AND **WHISPER HILL**.

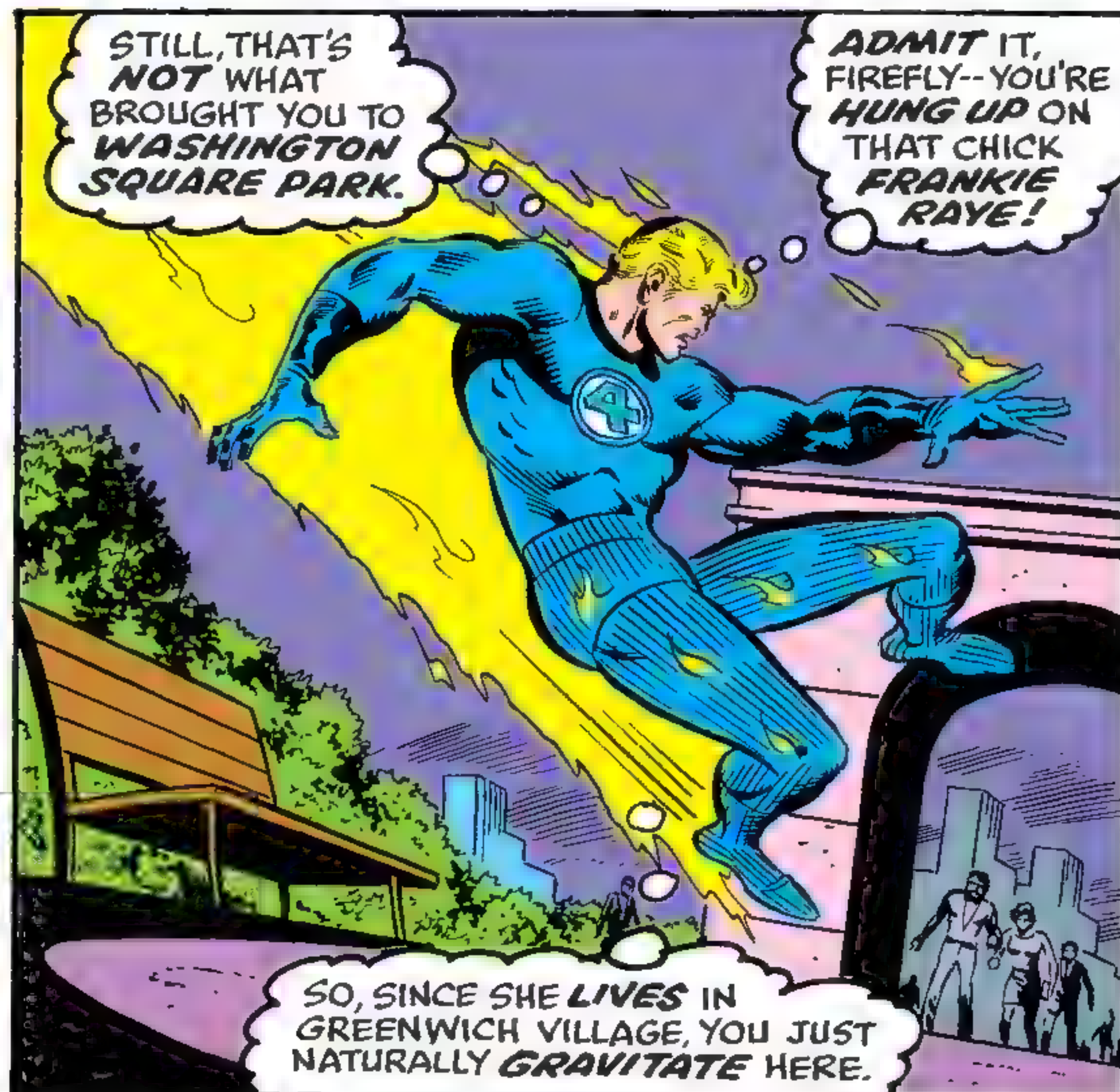


MEANWHILE-- ANYBODY OUT THERE REMEMBER THE **HUMAN TORCH**?

BEEN SWOOPING AROUND LIKE THIS FOR **HOURS** NOW.

I CAN REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN I'D YELL "**FLAME ON**," FLY AROUND FOR A FEW MINUTES-- THEN **FIZZLE OUT** LIKE A ROMAN CANDLE.

YOU'VE COME A **LONG WAY**, TORCHIE-BABY.



STILL, THAT'S **NOT** WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO **WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK**.

ADMIT IT, FIREFLY-- YOU'RE **HUNG UP** ON THAT CHICK **FRANKIE RAYE**!

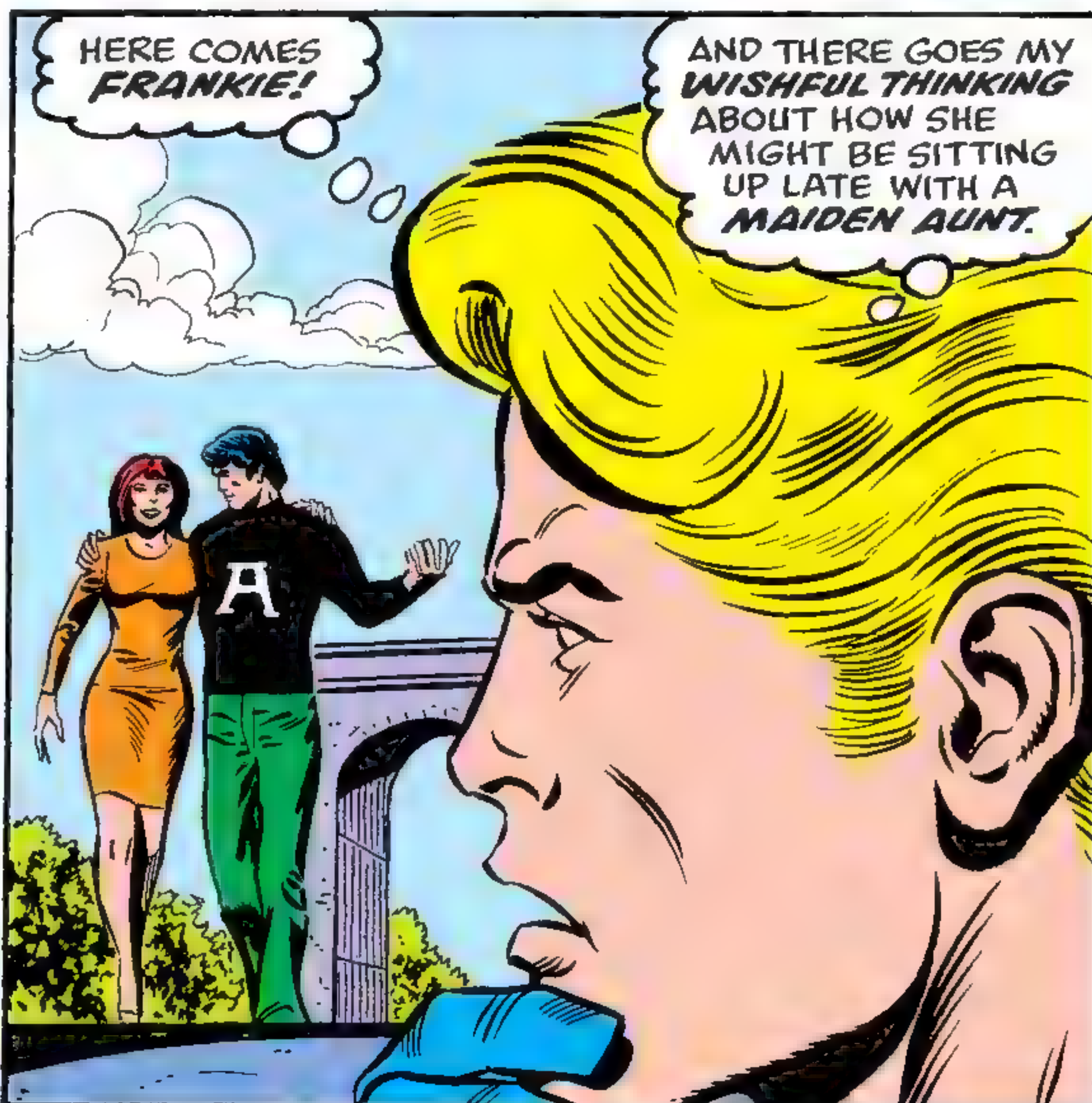
SO, SINCE SHE **LIVES** IN **GREENWICH VILLAGE**, YOU JUST NATURALLY **GRAVITATE** HERE.



ONLY THING IS, SHE'S **OUT** FOR THE EVENING-- AND EVEN WHEN SHE'S **IN**, SHE'S BEEN OUT TO **YOU**--

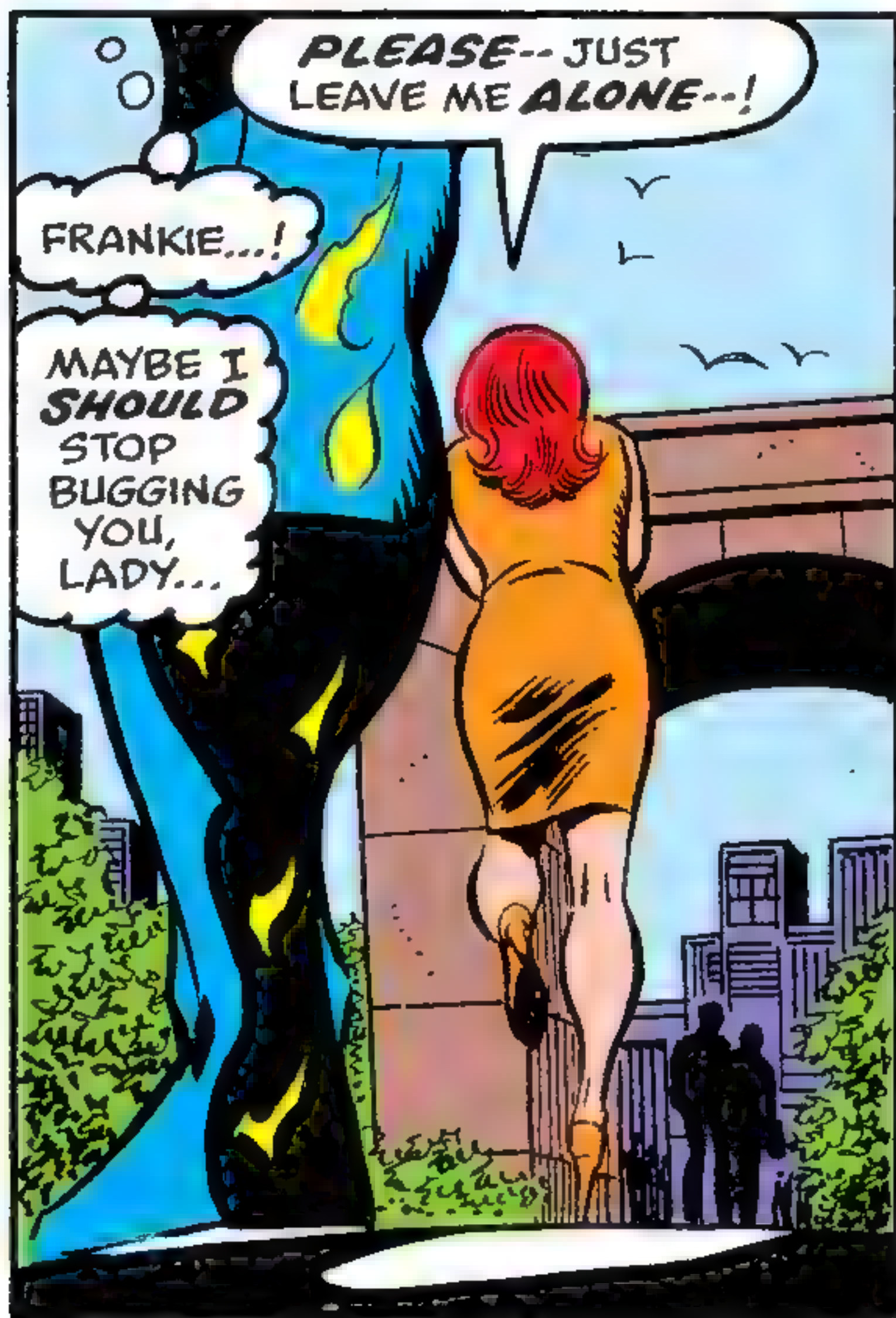
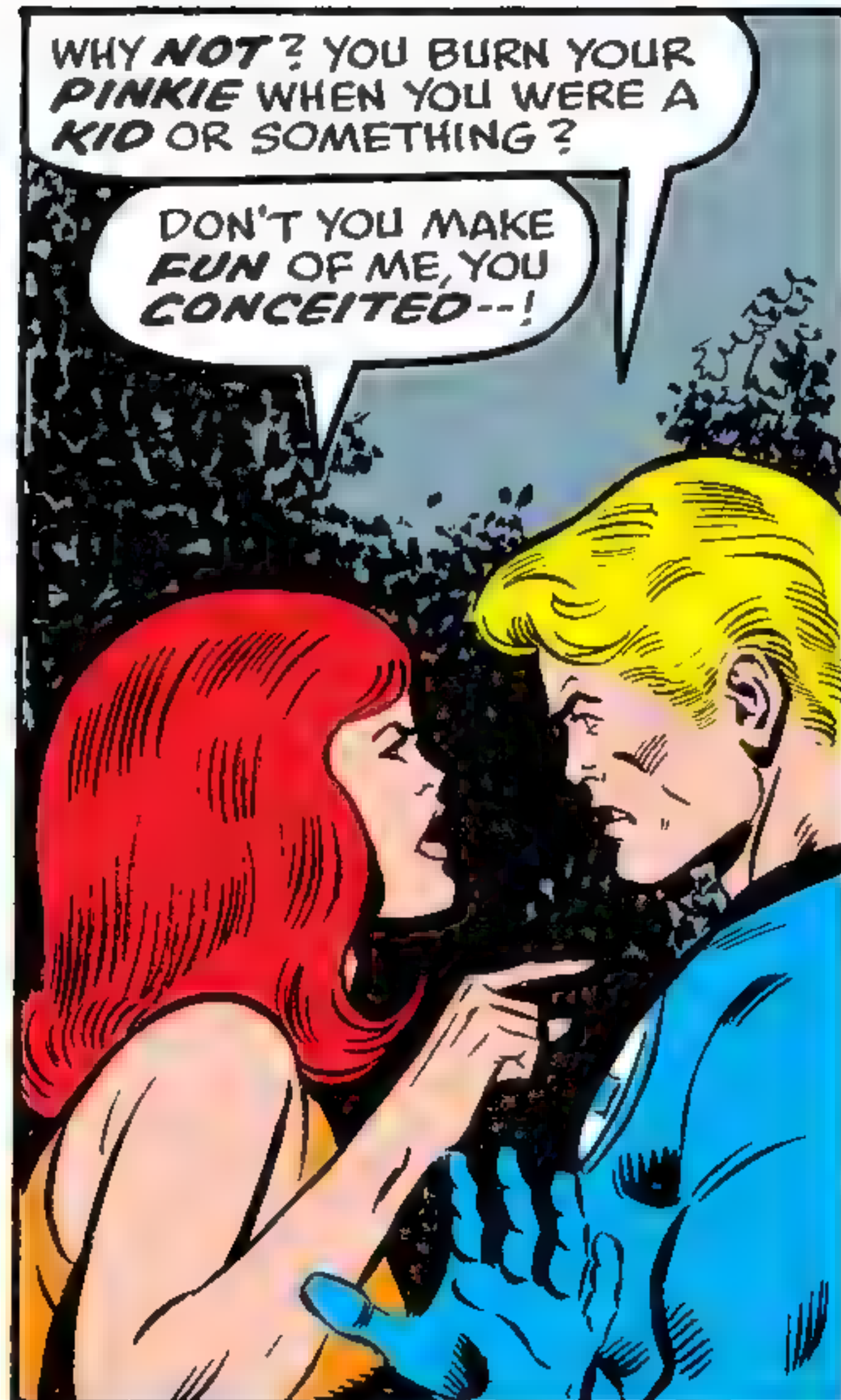
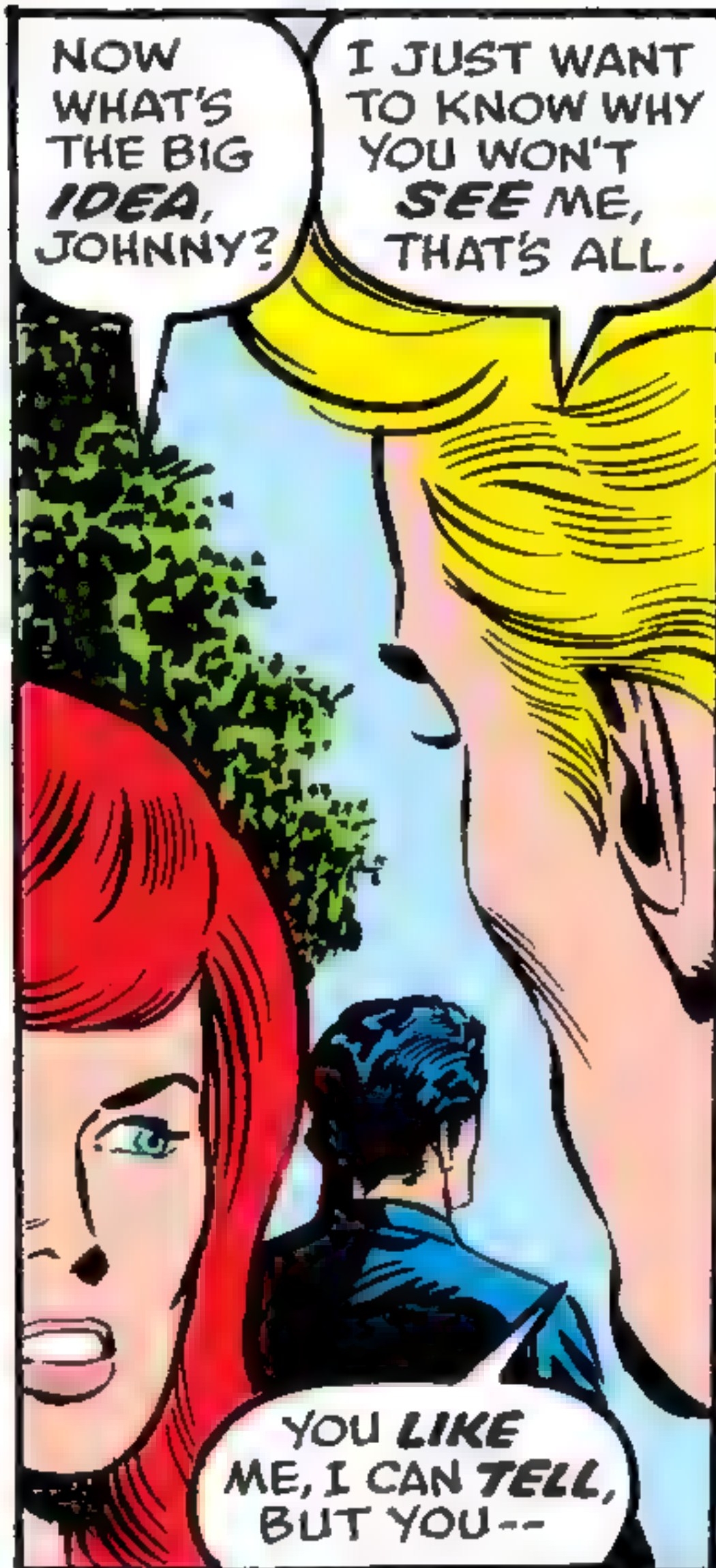
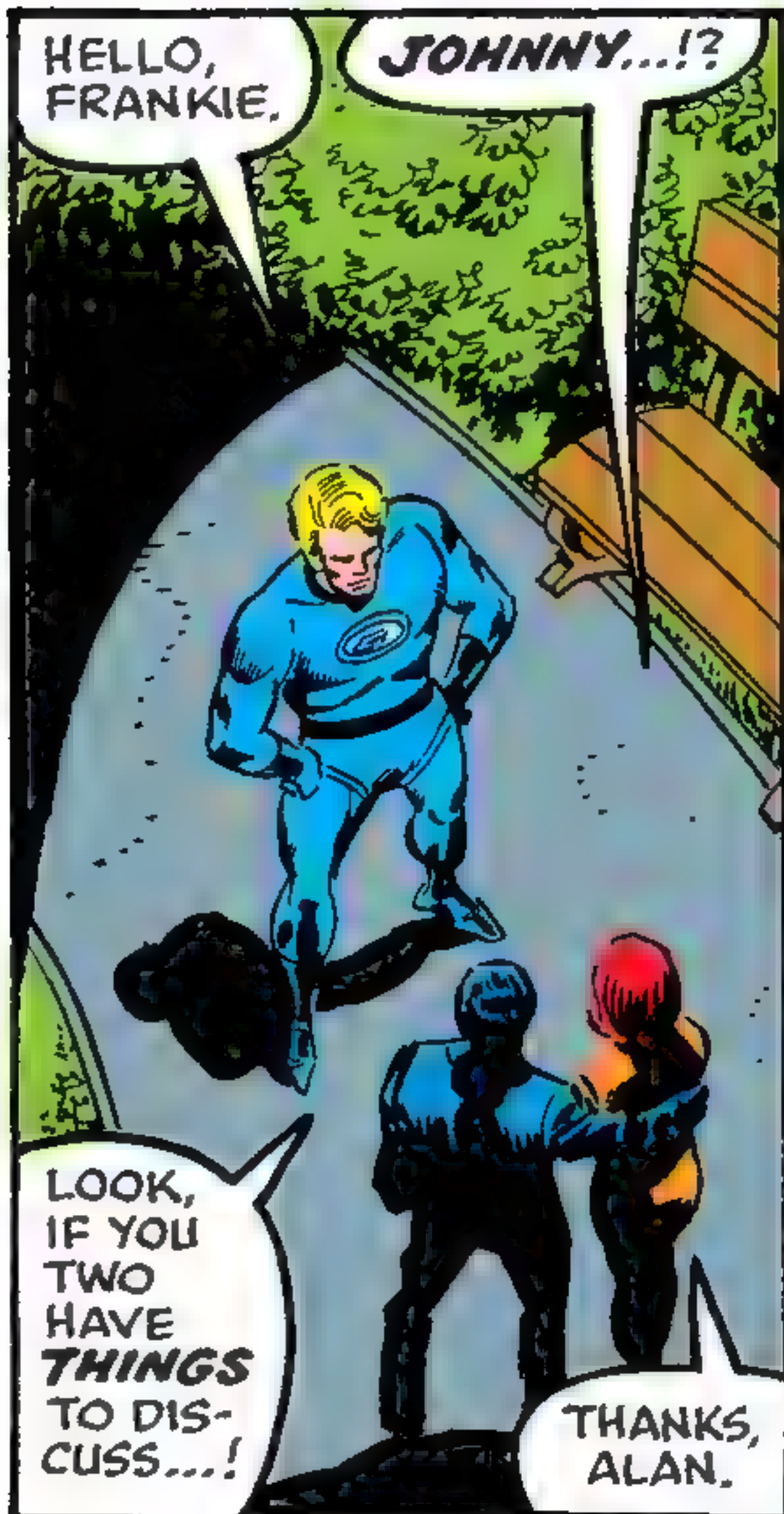
--SINCE SHE'S GOT SOME KIND OF **PHOBIA** ABOUT DATING A **FLAMING SUPER-HERO**.

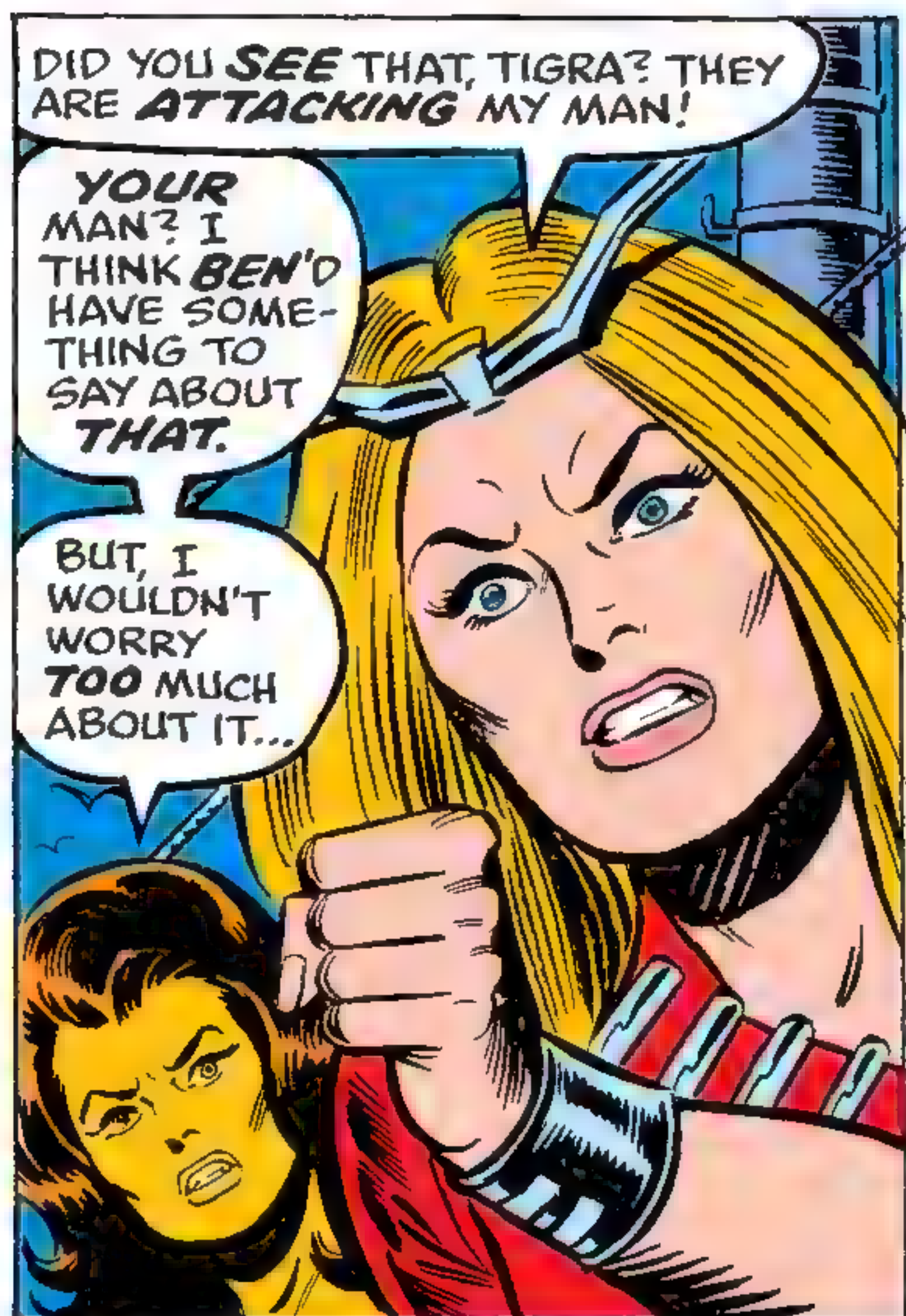
GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT IT-- **UH OH!**

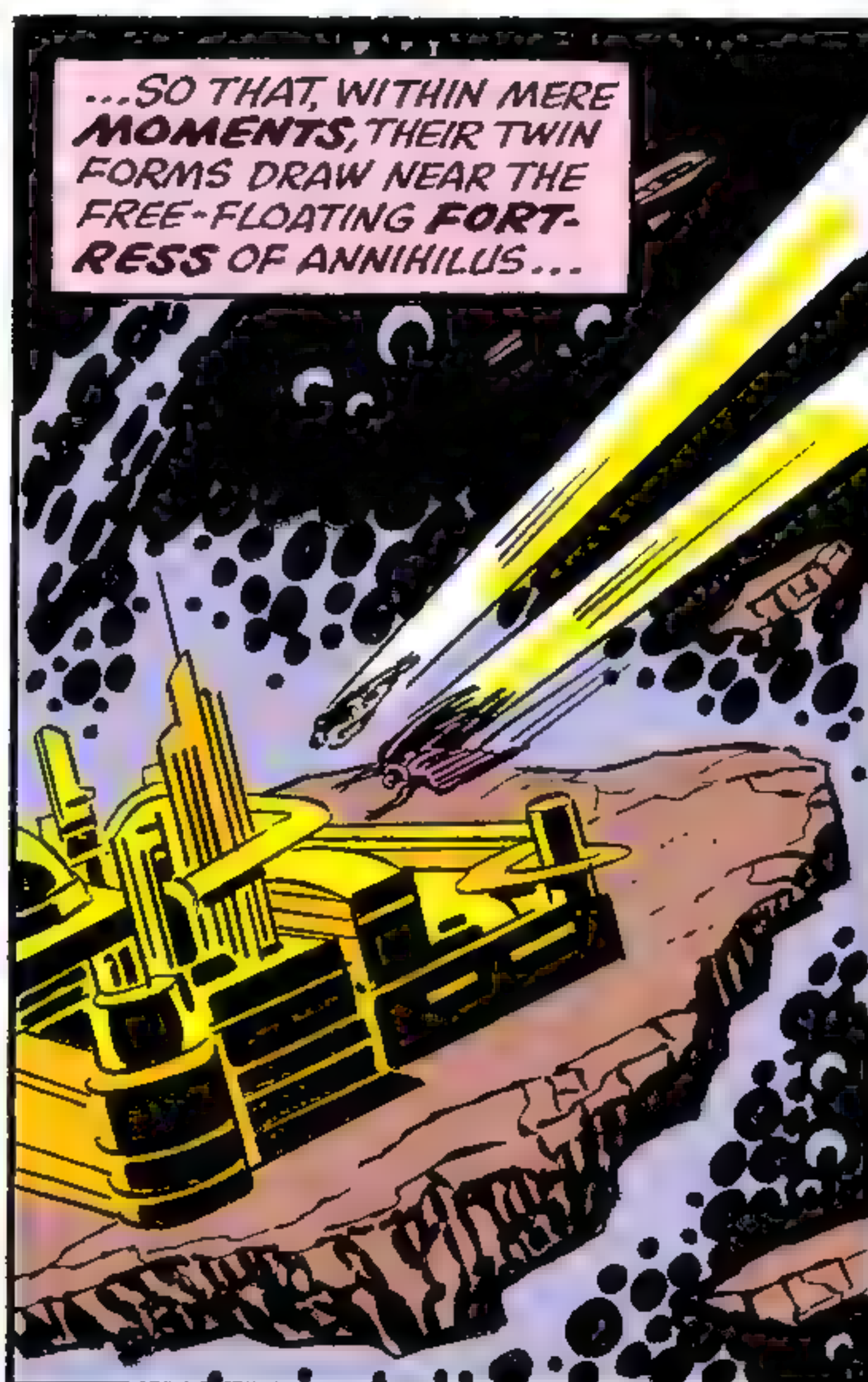
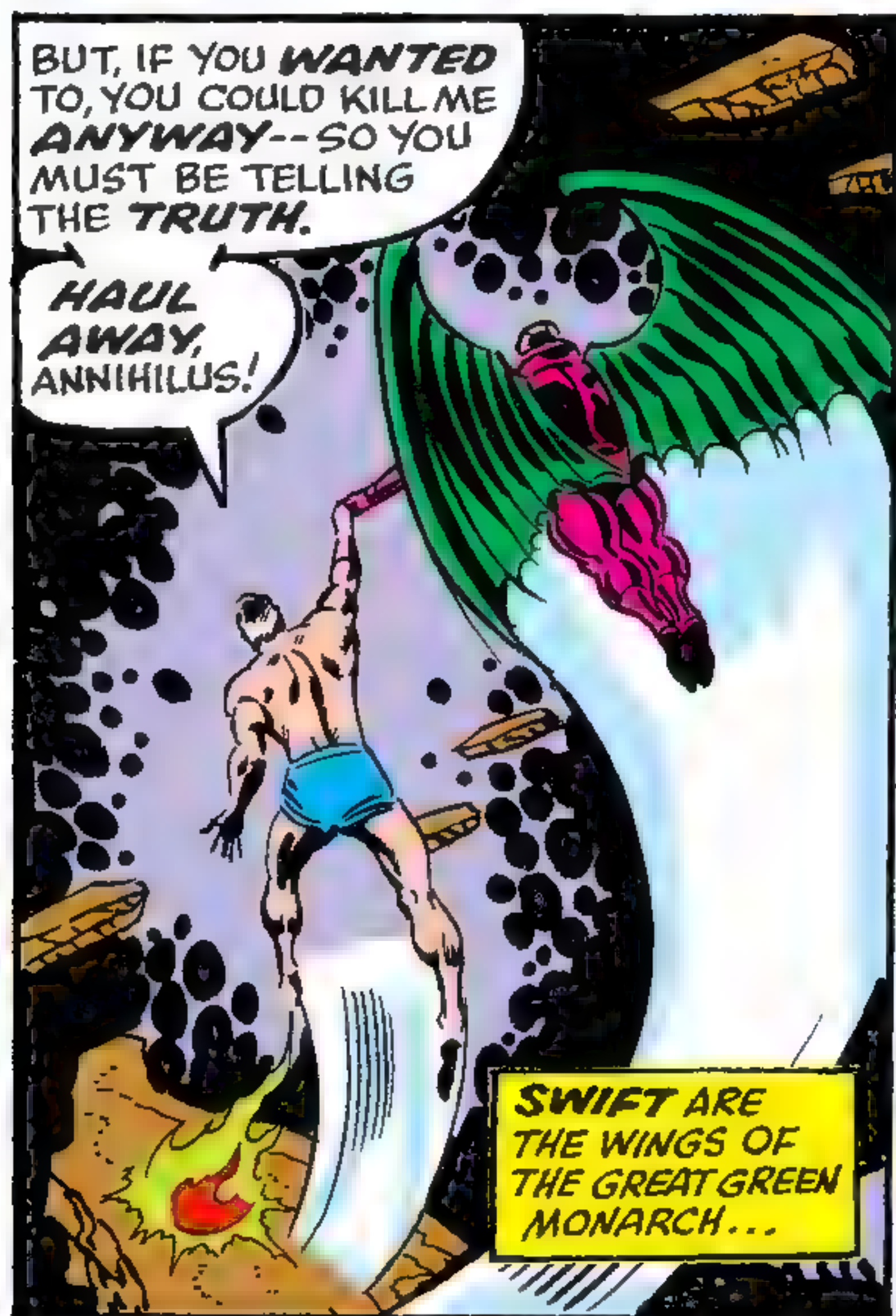
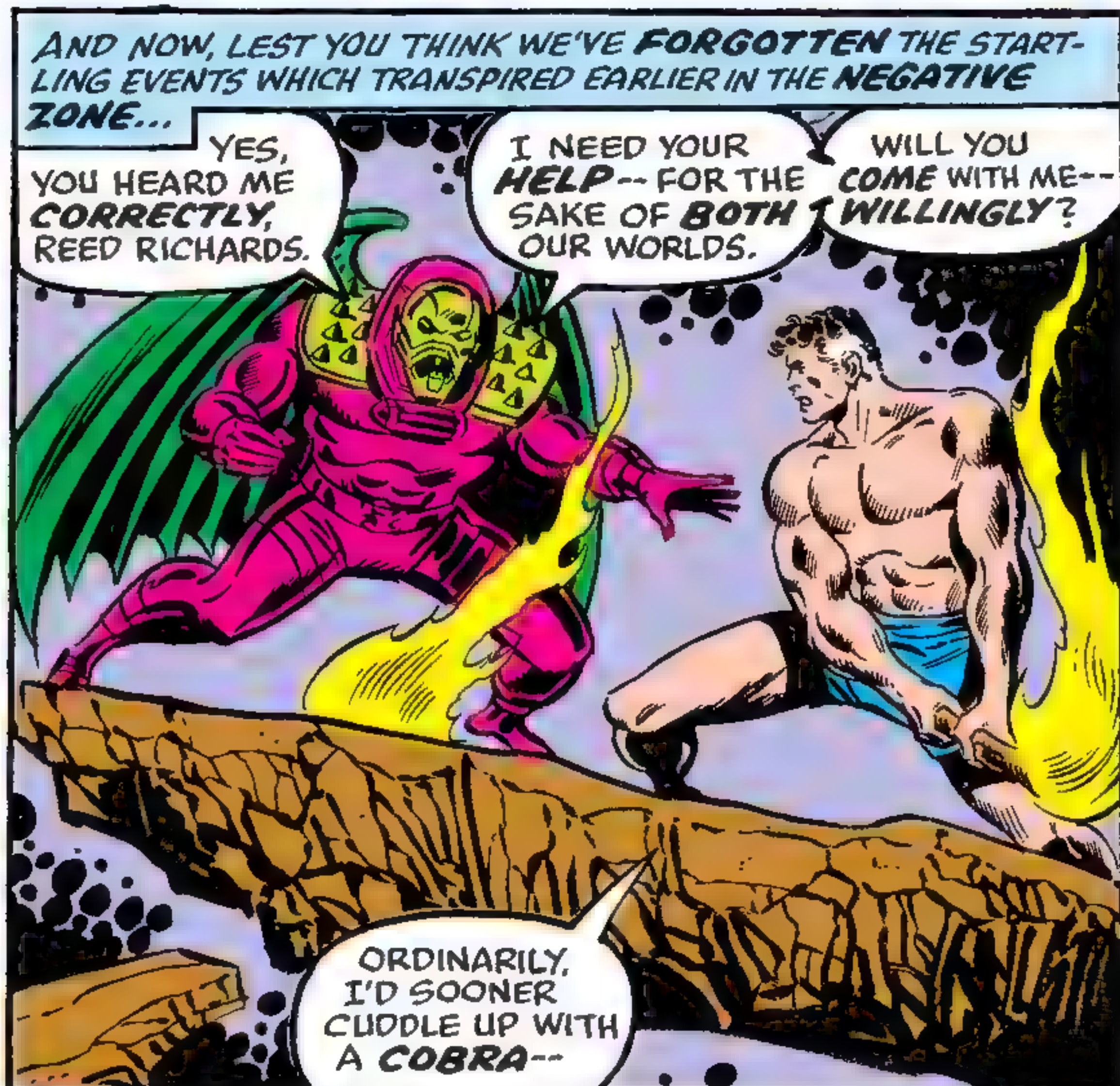
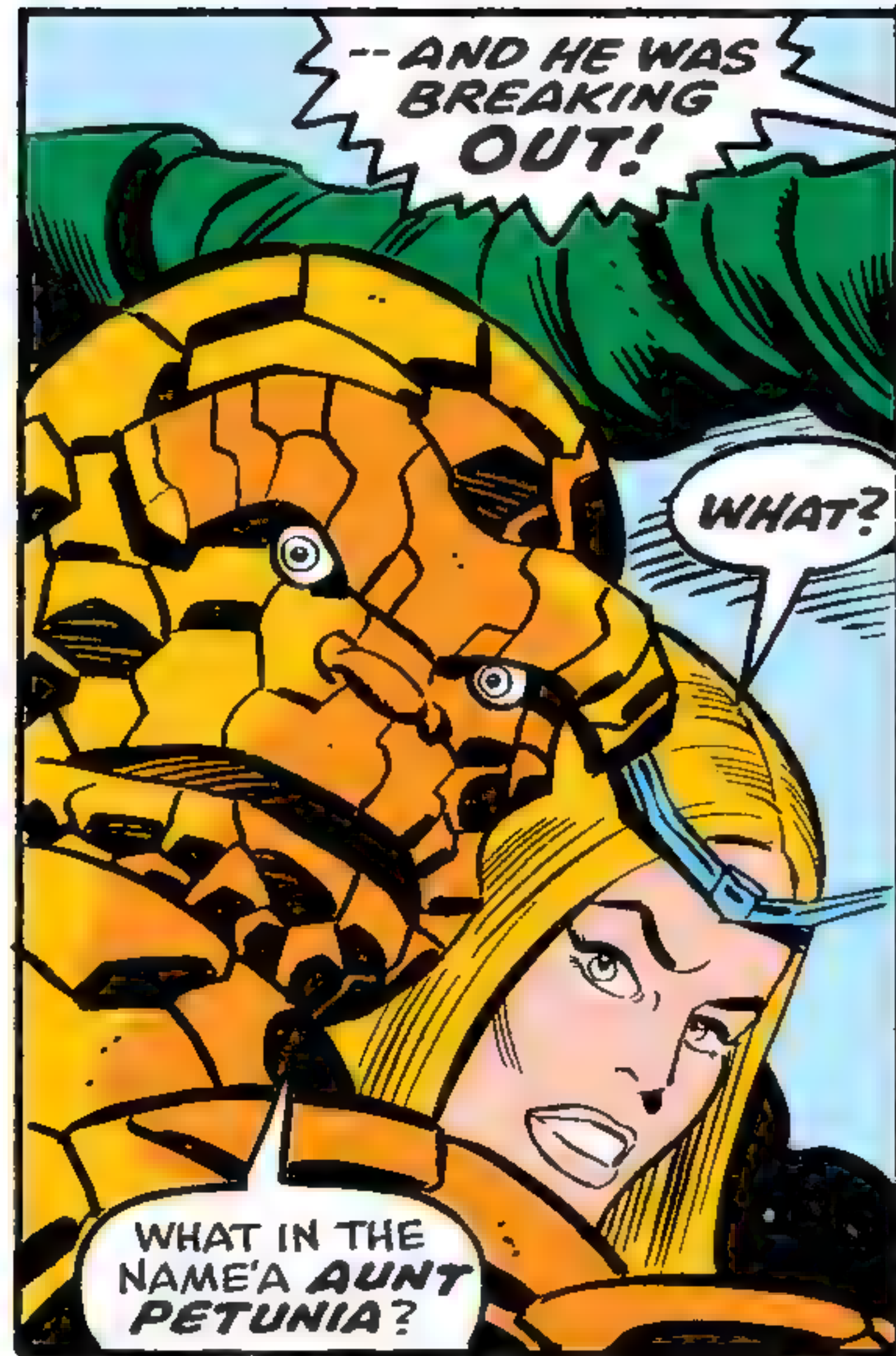
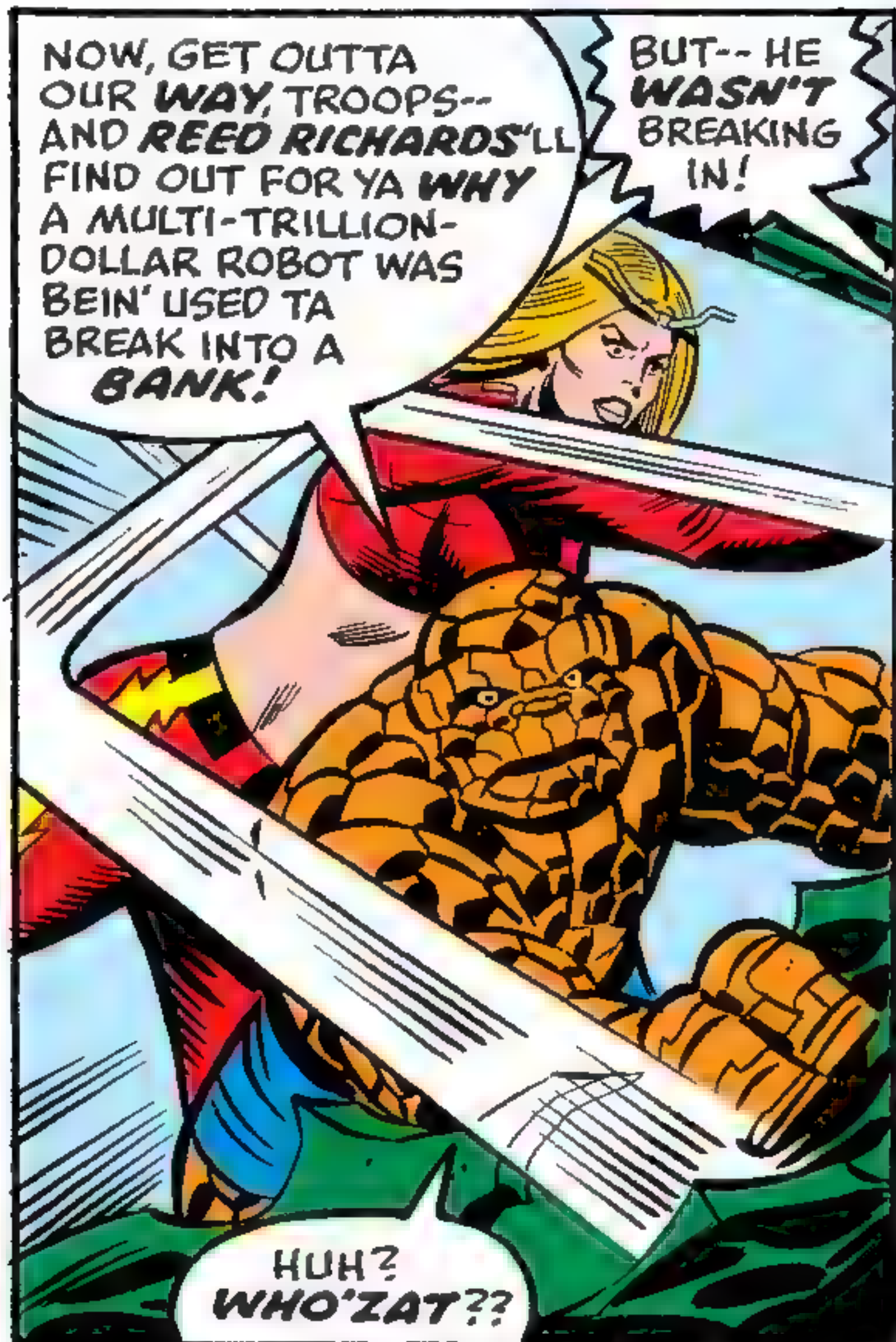


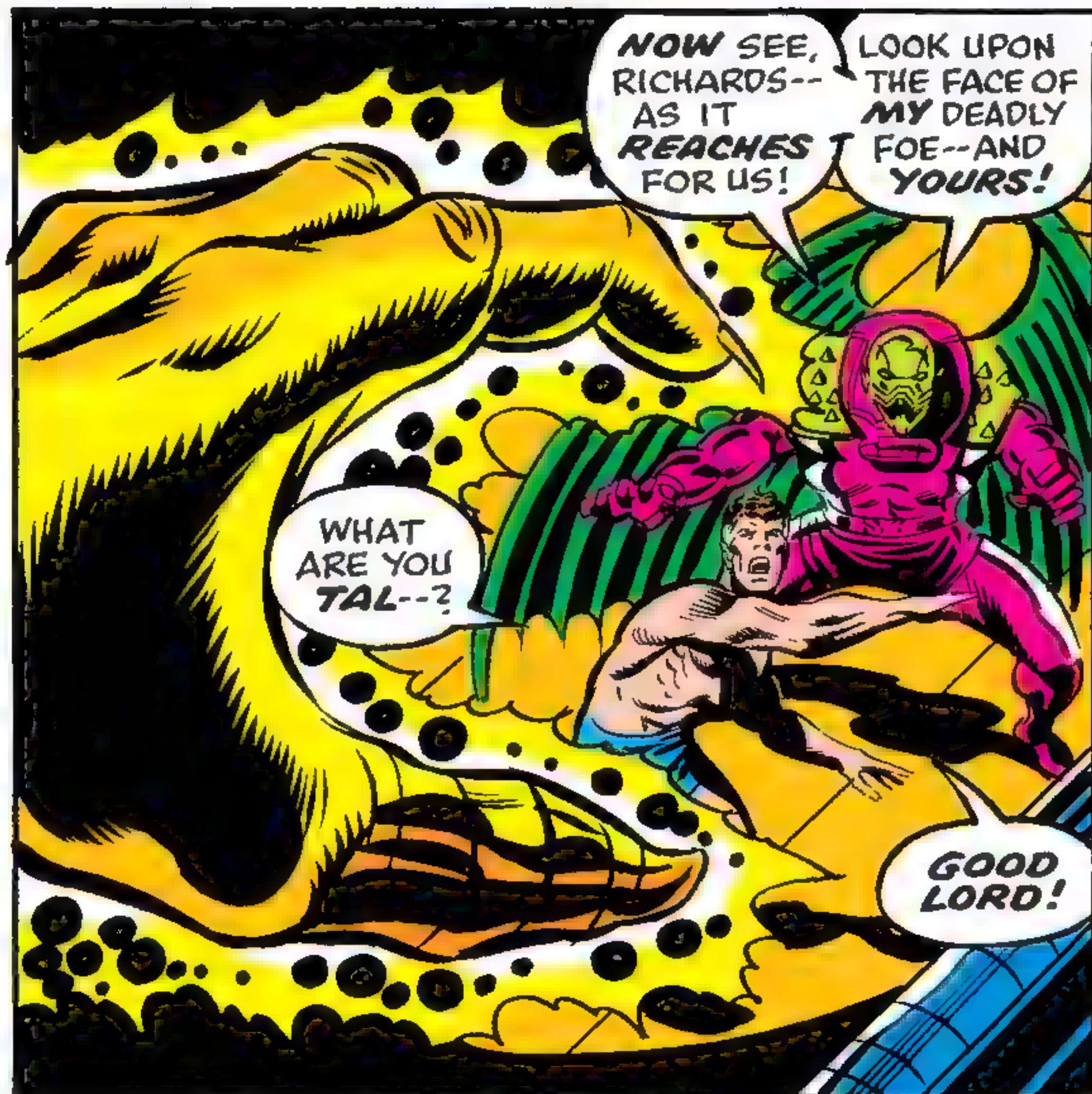
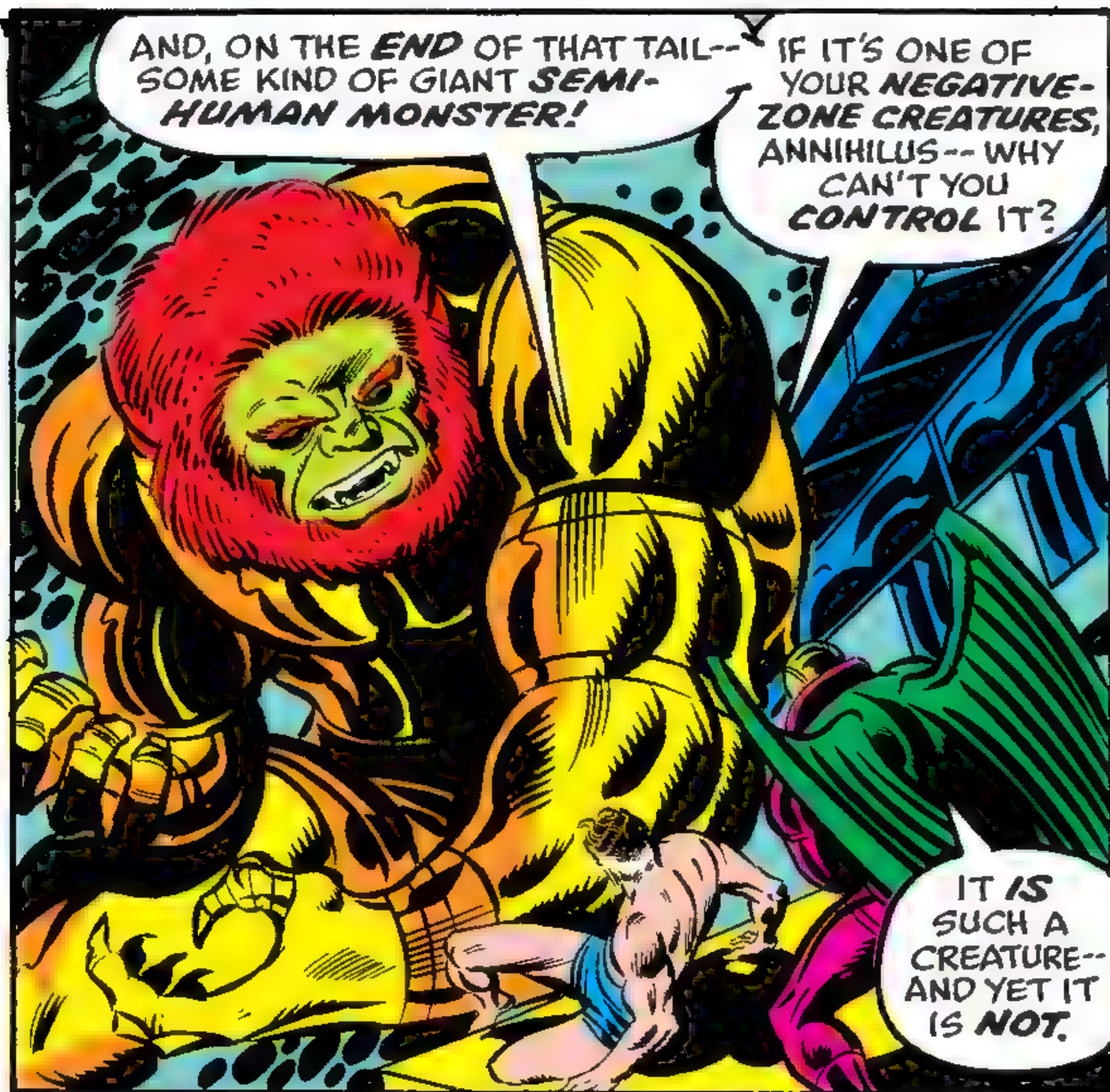
HERE COMES **FRANKIE**!

AND THERE GOES MY **WISHFUL THINKING** ABOUT HOW SHE MIGHT BE SITTING UP LATE WITH A **MAIDEN AUNT**.









FANTASTIC
FOUR

30¢
©

182
MAY
02962

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR®



TM



TM



THE ONLY
ONES WHO CAN
SAVE YOU ARE
TRAPPED IN
THE NEGATIVE
ZONE!

YOU'RE ALONE,
SUE STORM--
ALONE AGAINST
THE BRUTE!

AND MY
FORCE FIELD
WON'T HOLD
HIM BACK FOR
LONG!



WILSON
SINNOTT

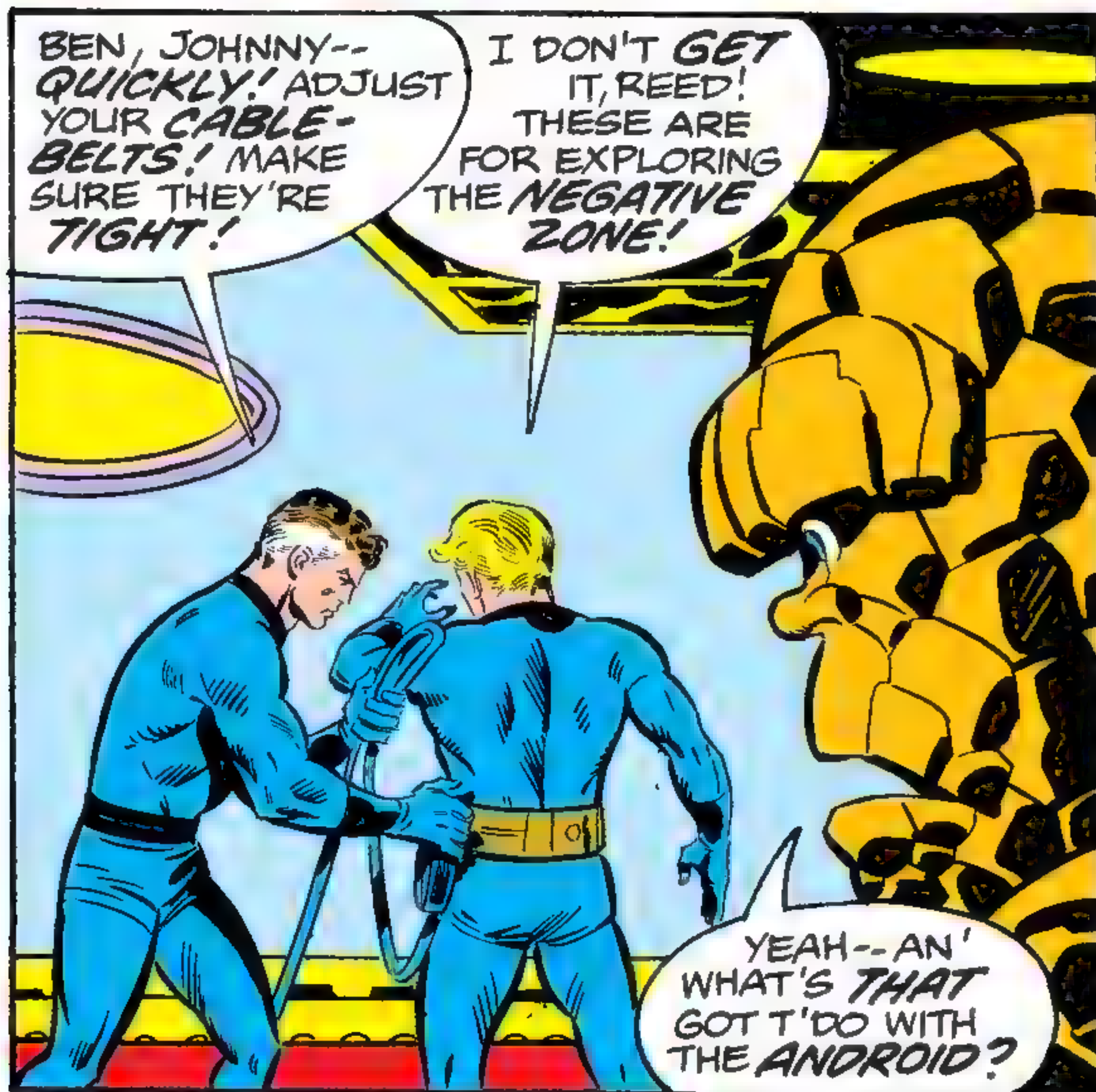
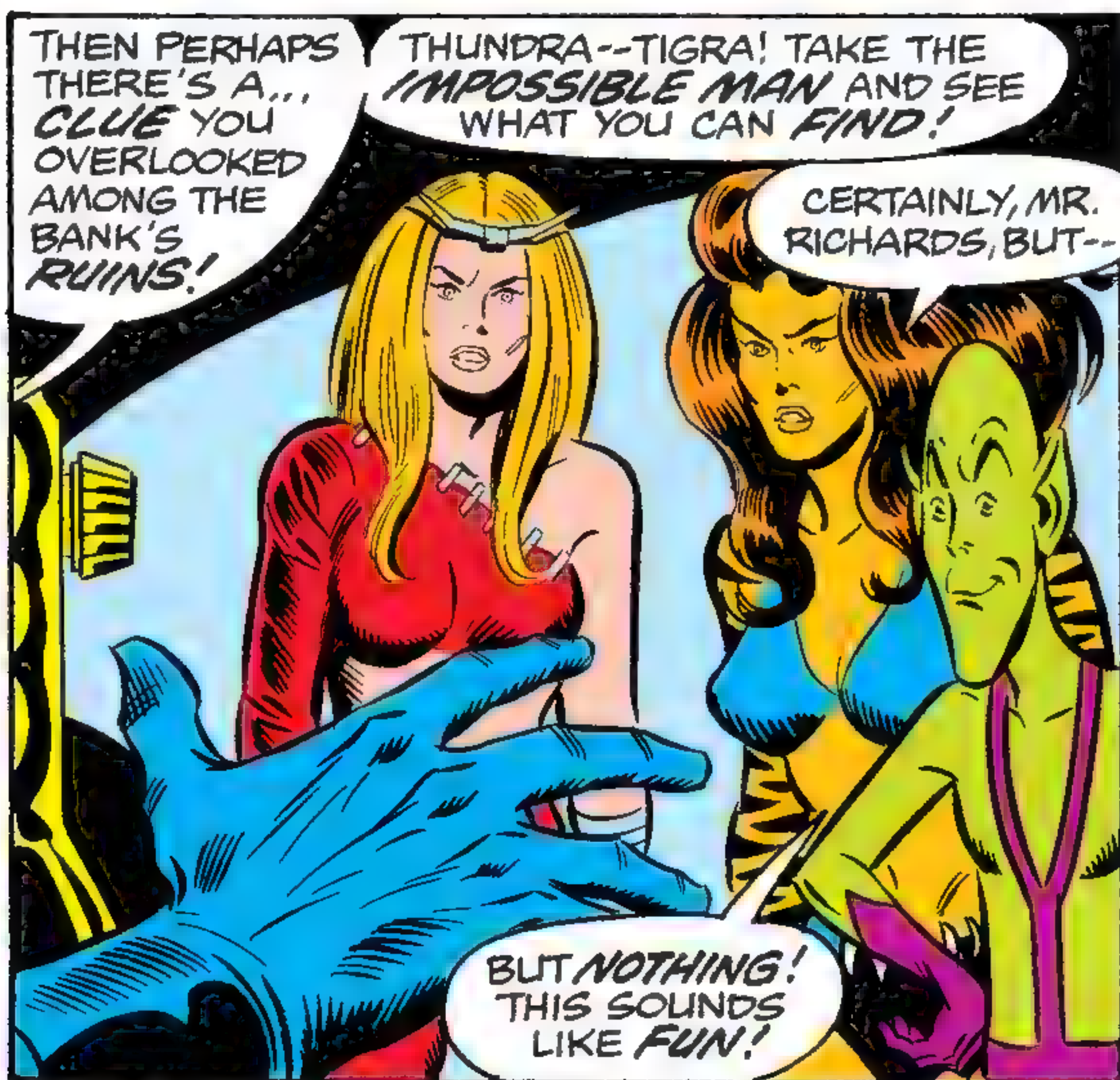
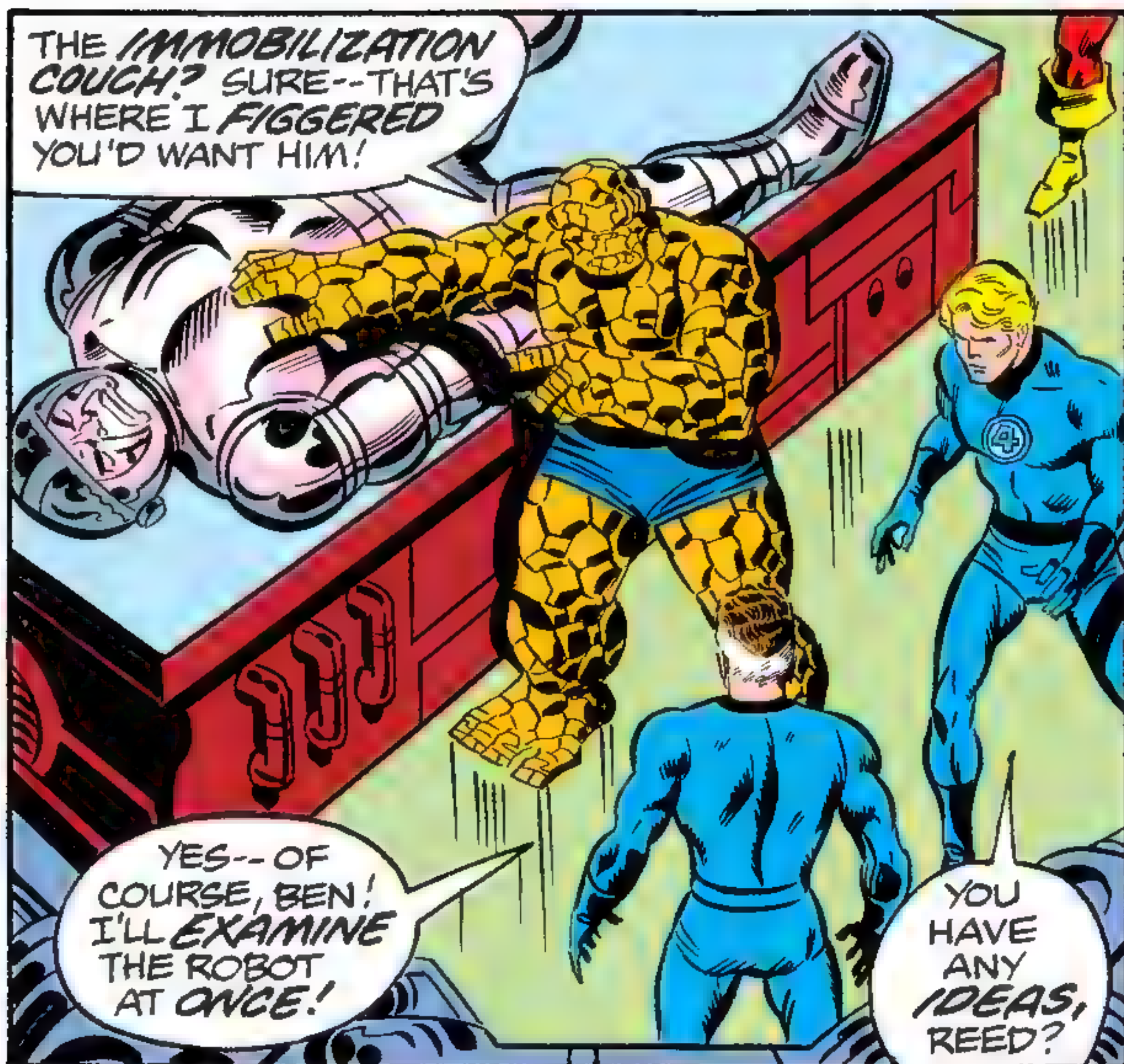
A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

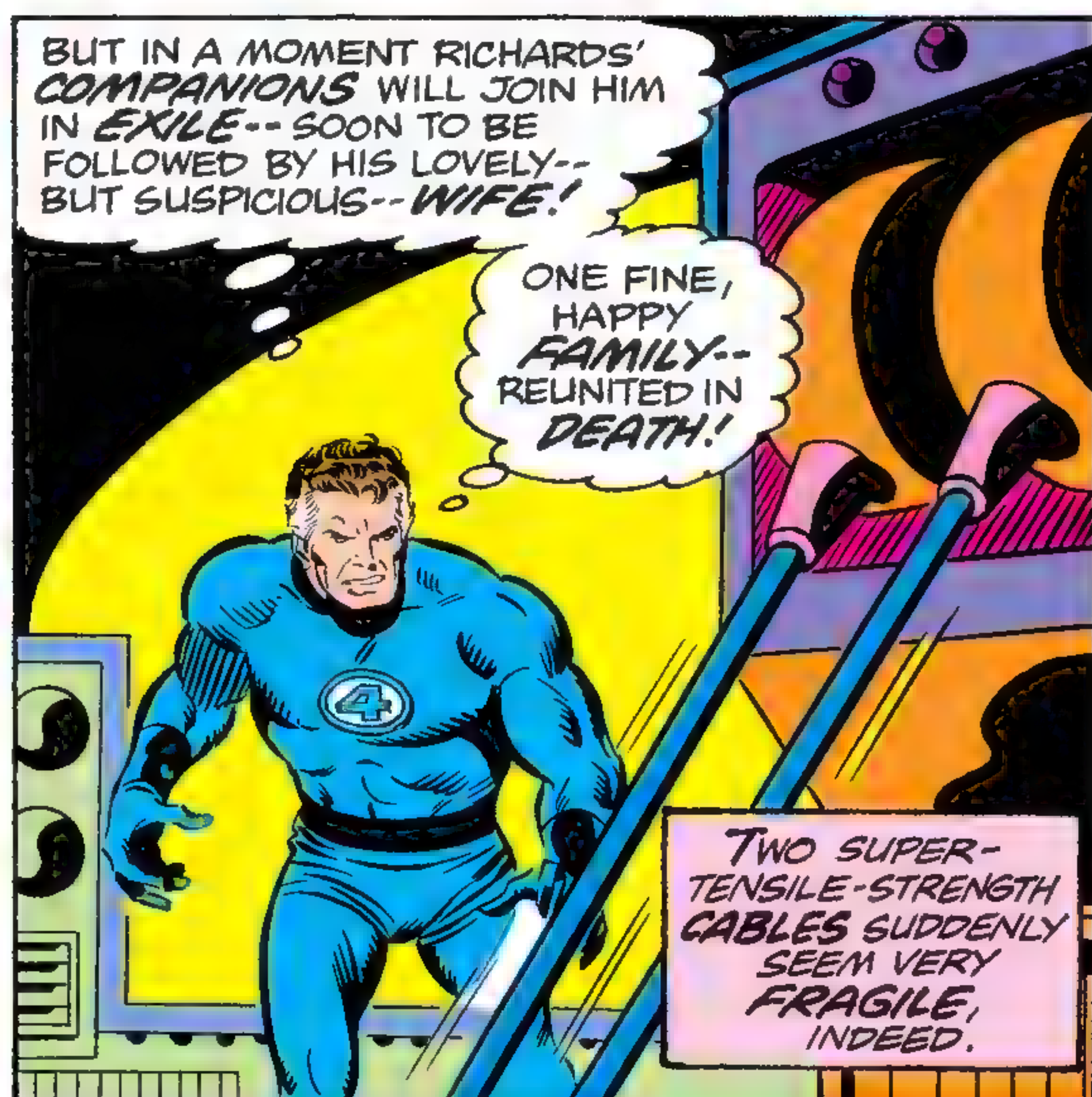
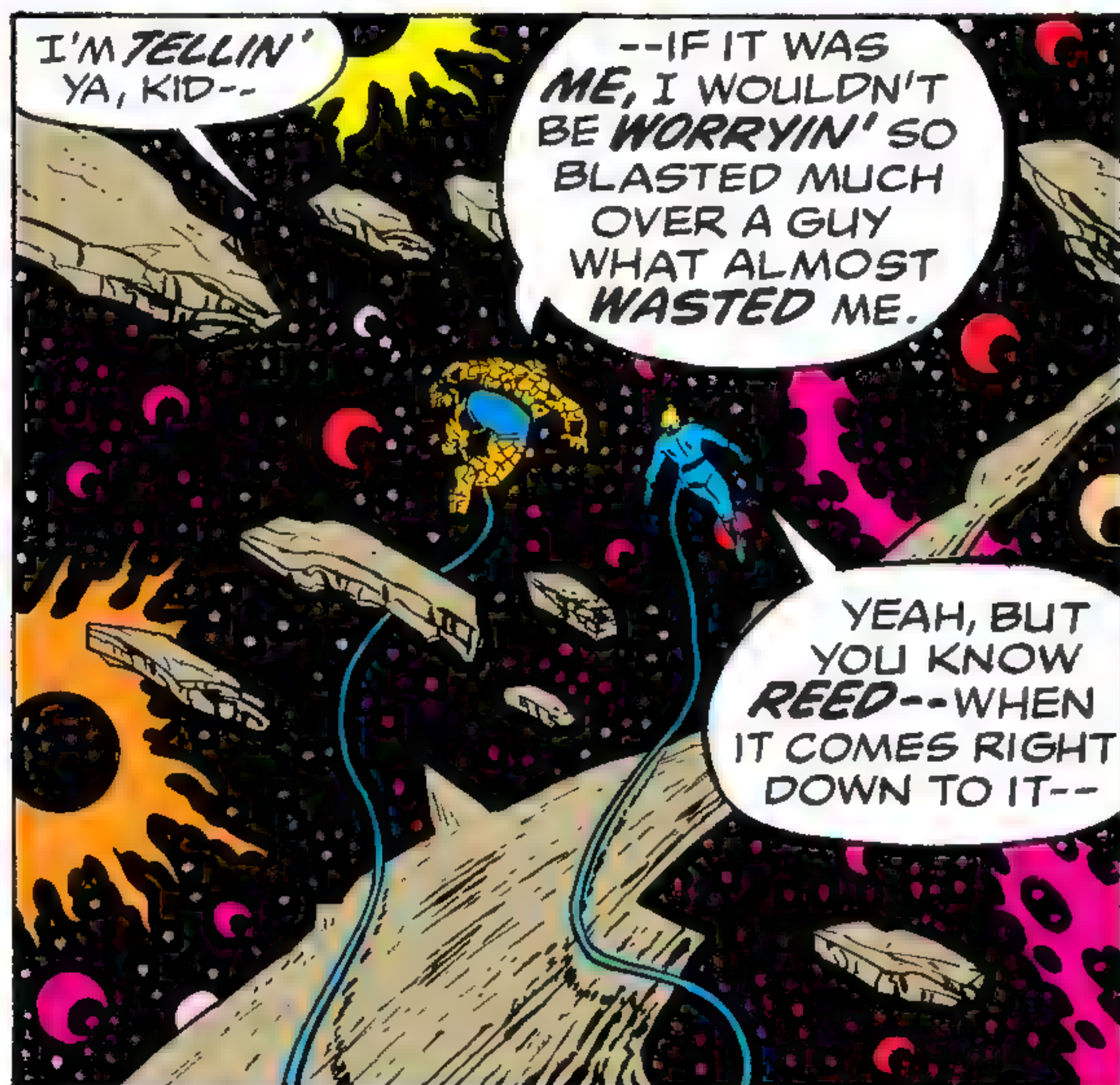
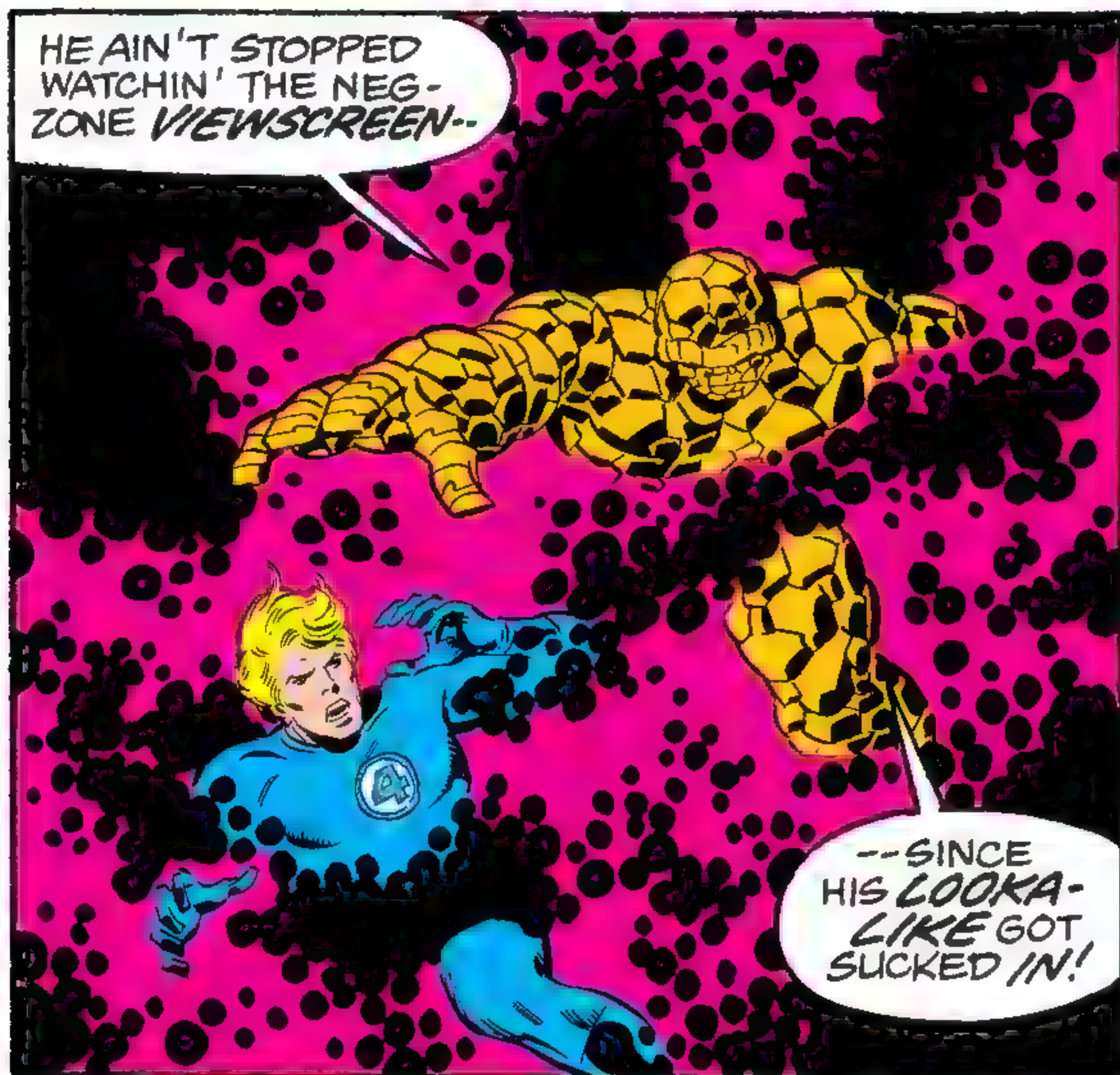
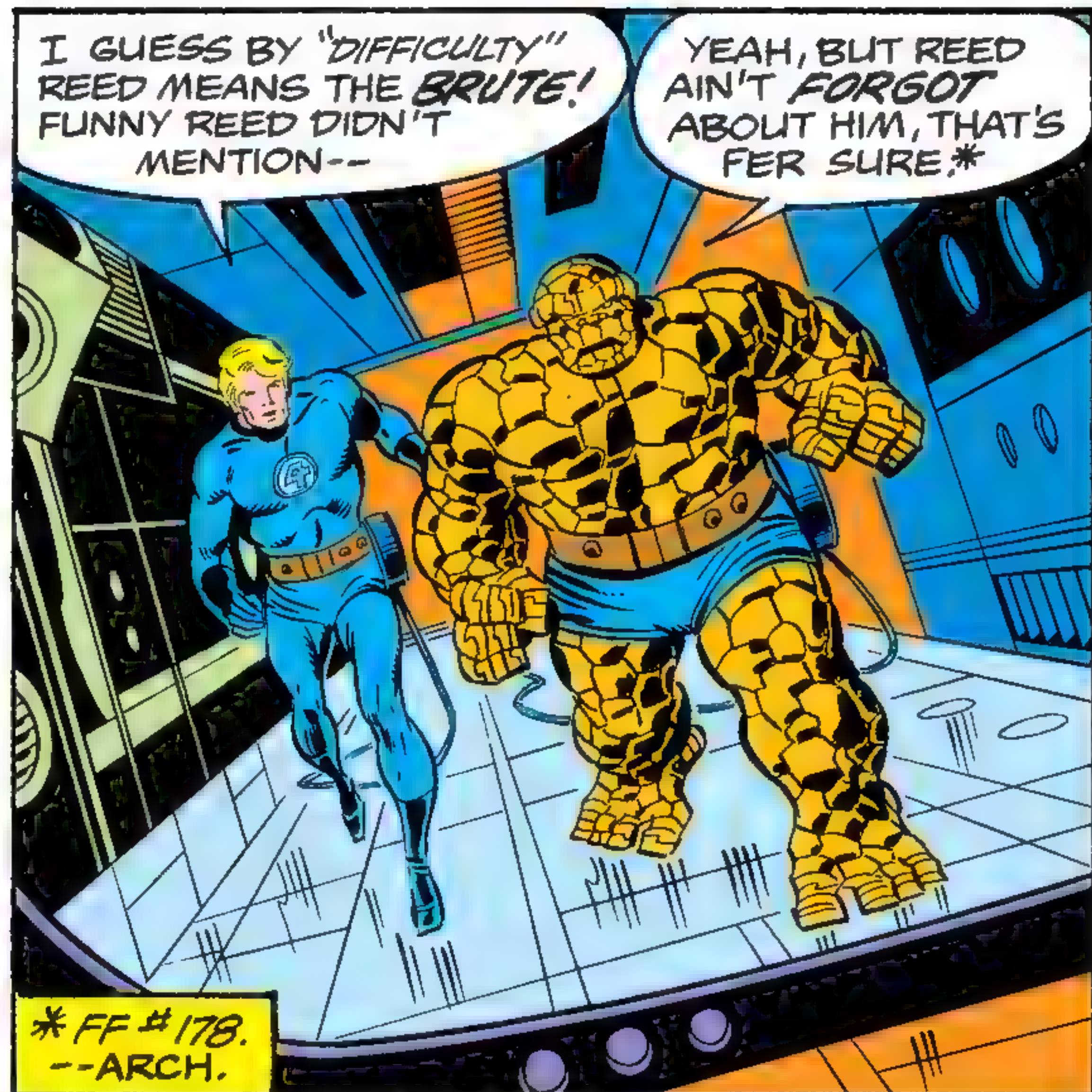
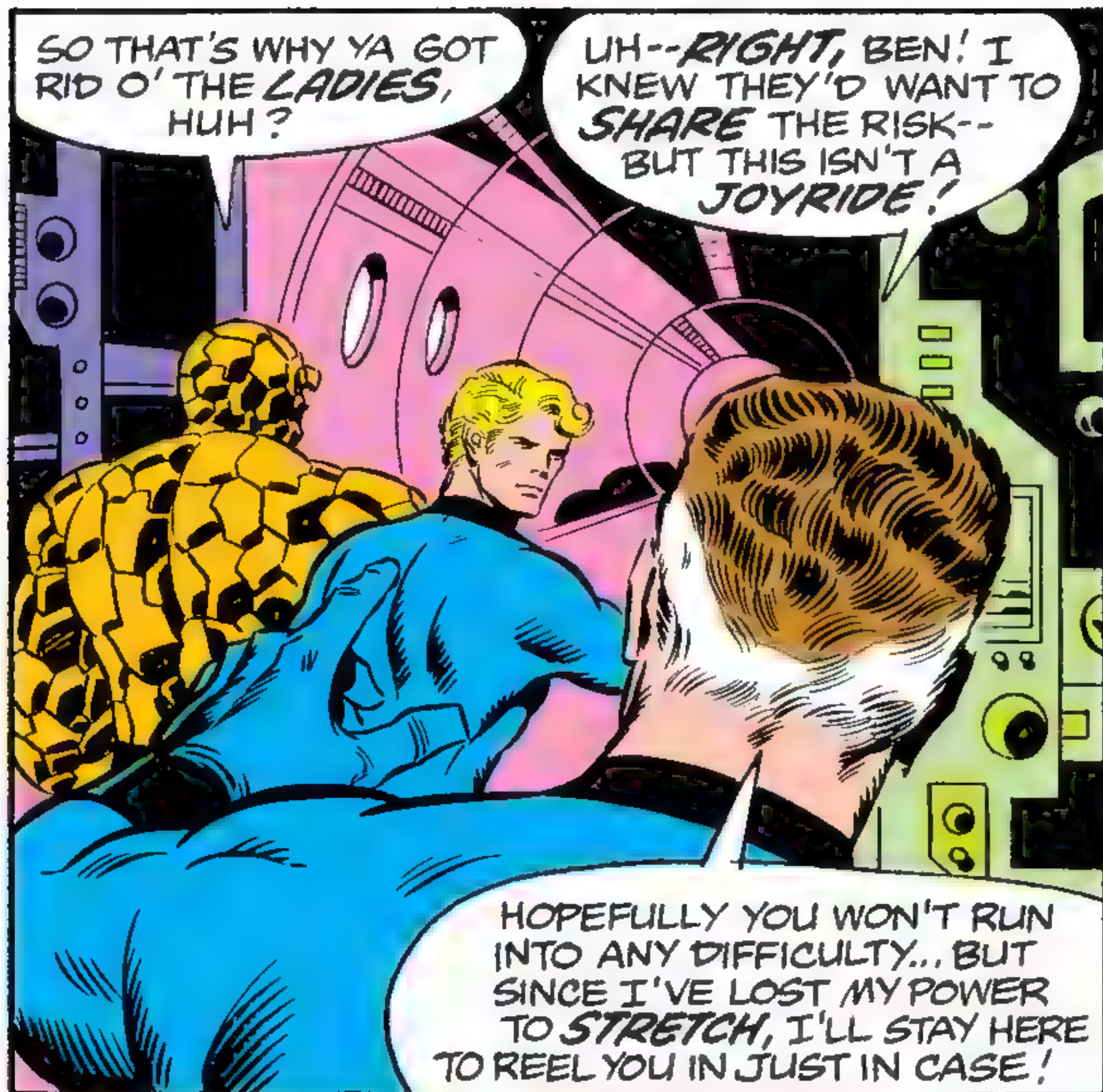
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

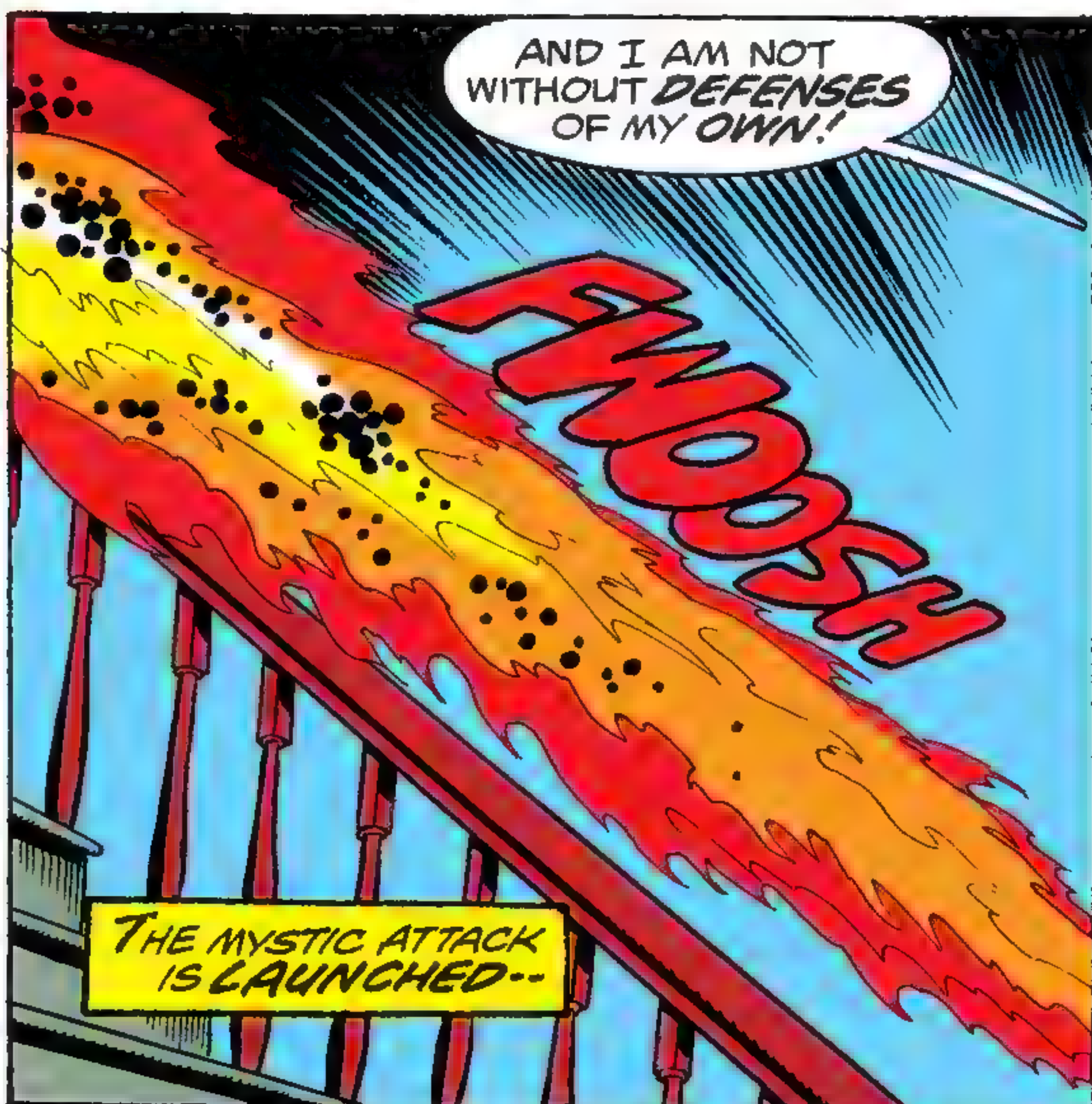
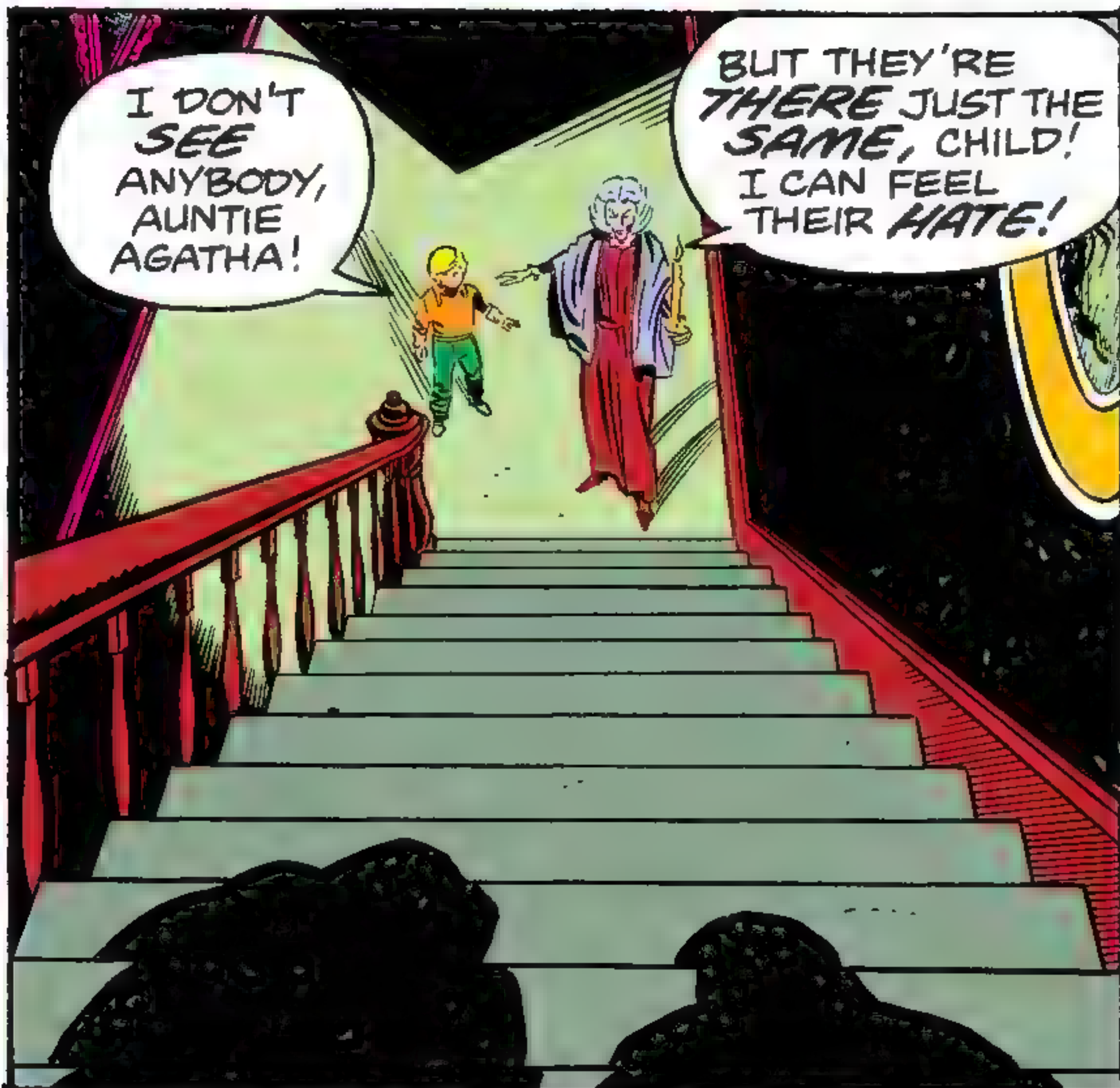
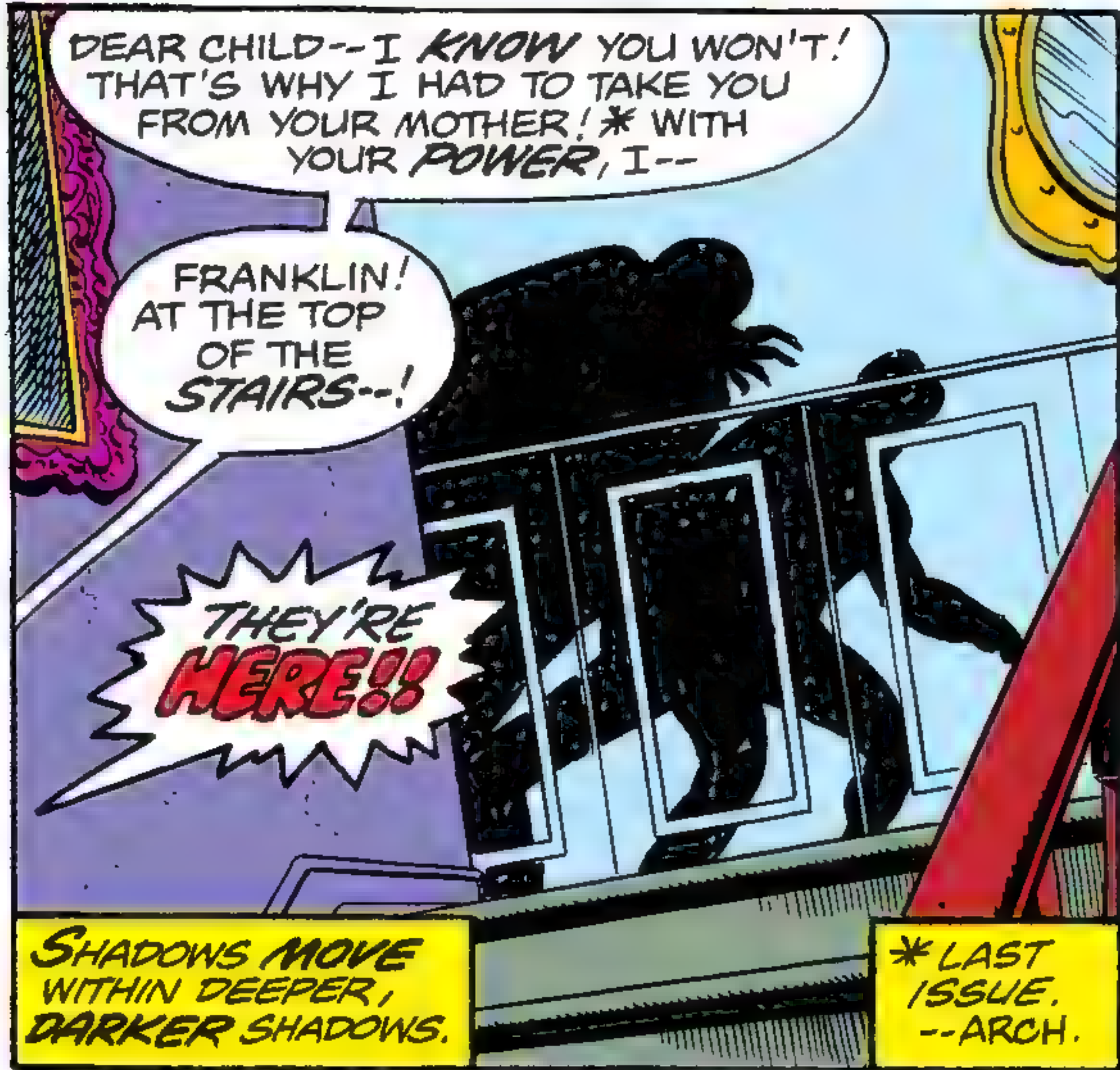
BILL MANTLO / LEN WEIN, JIM SHOOTER, ARCHIE GOODWIN / SAL BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT / A. GOODWIN
SCRIPTER PLOTTERS ARTISTS EDITOR

AS IF THE F.F. DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT... **ENTER: THE MAD THINKER!**









--AND THE TOP OF THE STAIRCASE
IS ENGULFED IN FLAMES THAT DEFEY
EARTHLY DESCRIPTION--



--BUT JUST
AS SUDDEN-
LY AS IT
BEGAN--

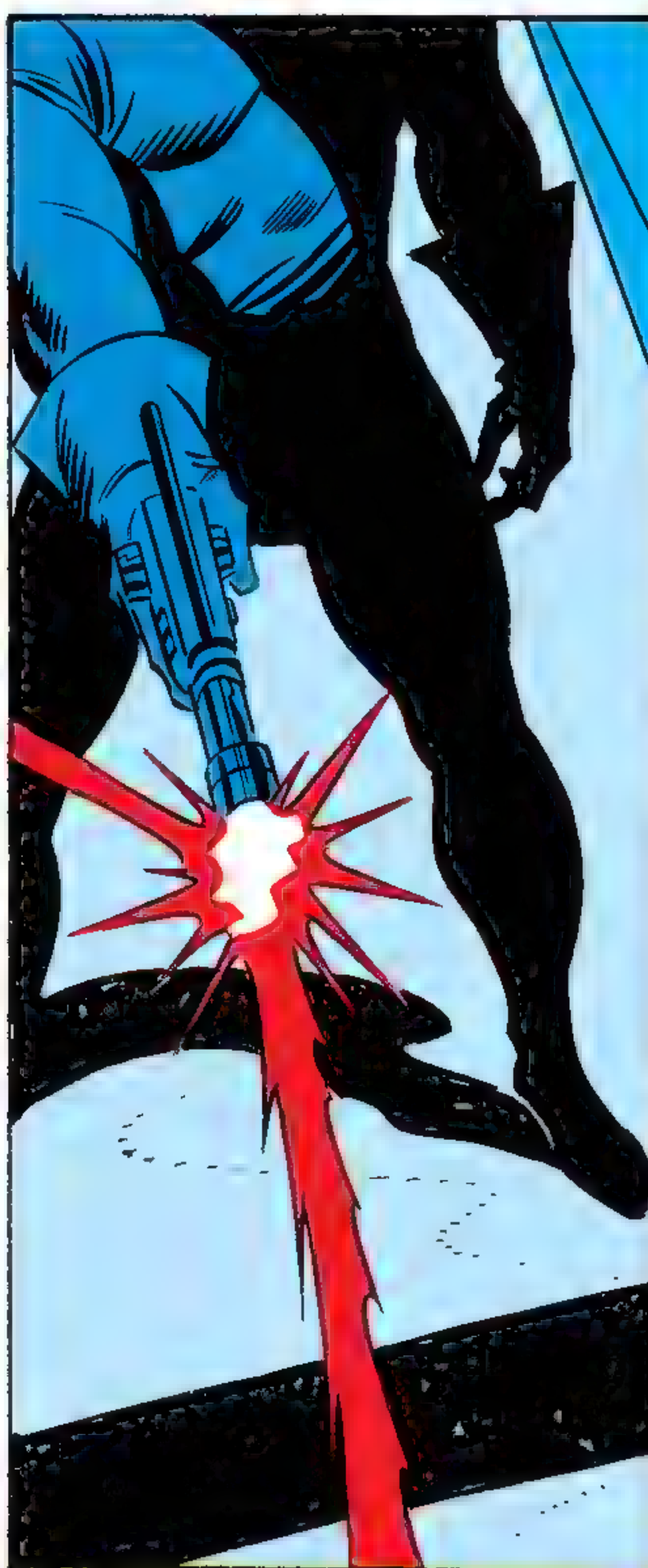
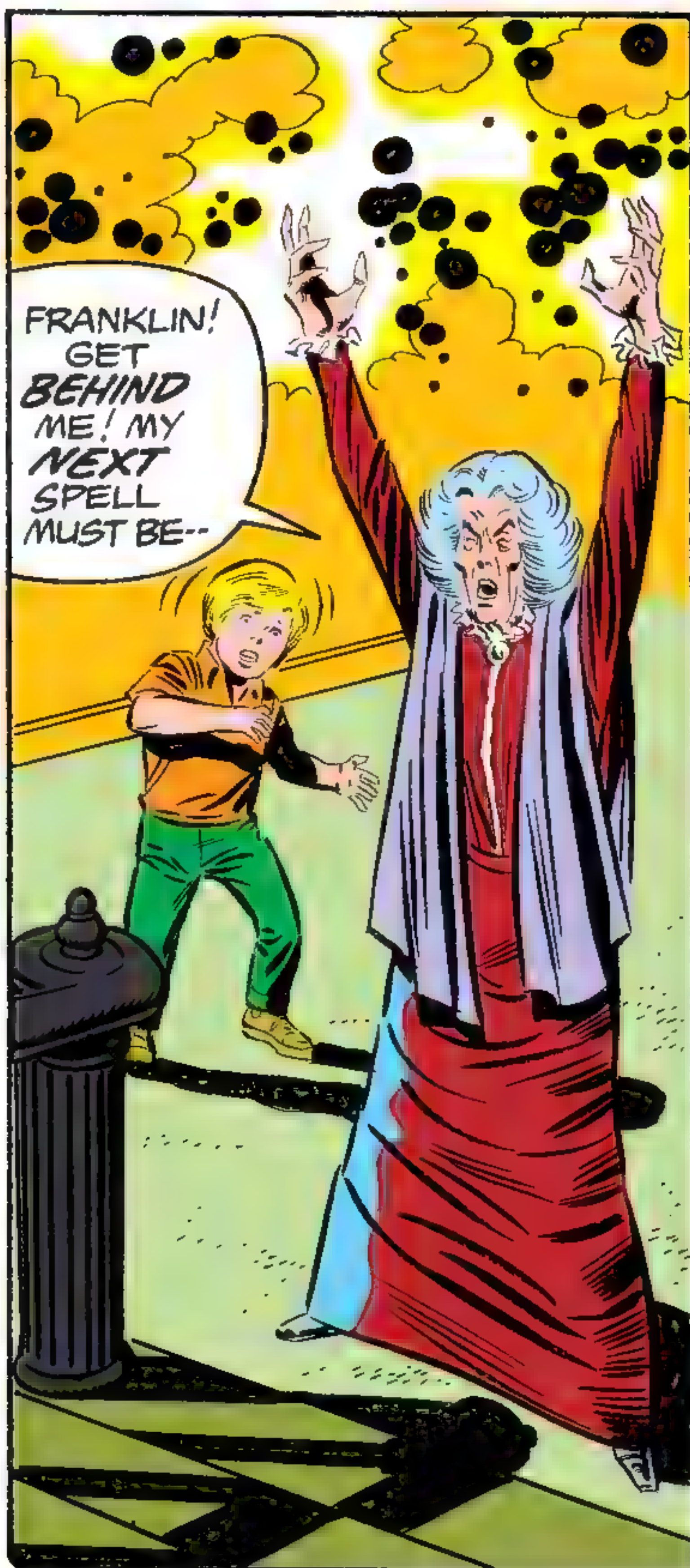


--IT IS OVER...THE ELDRITCH
FIRES SCREAMING--



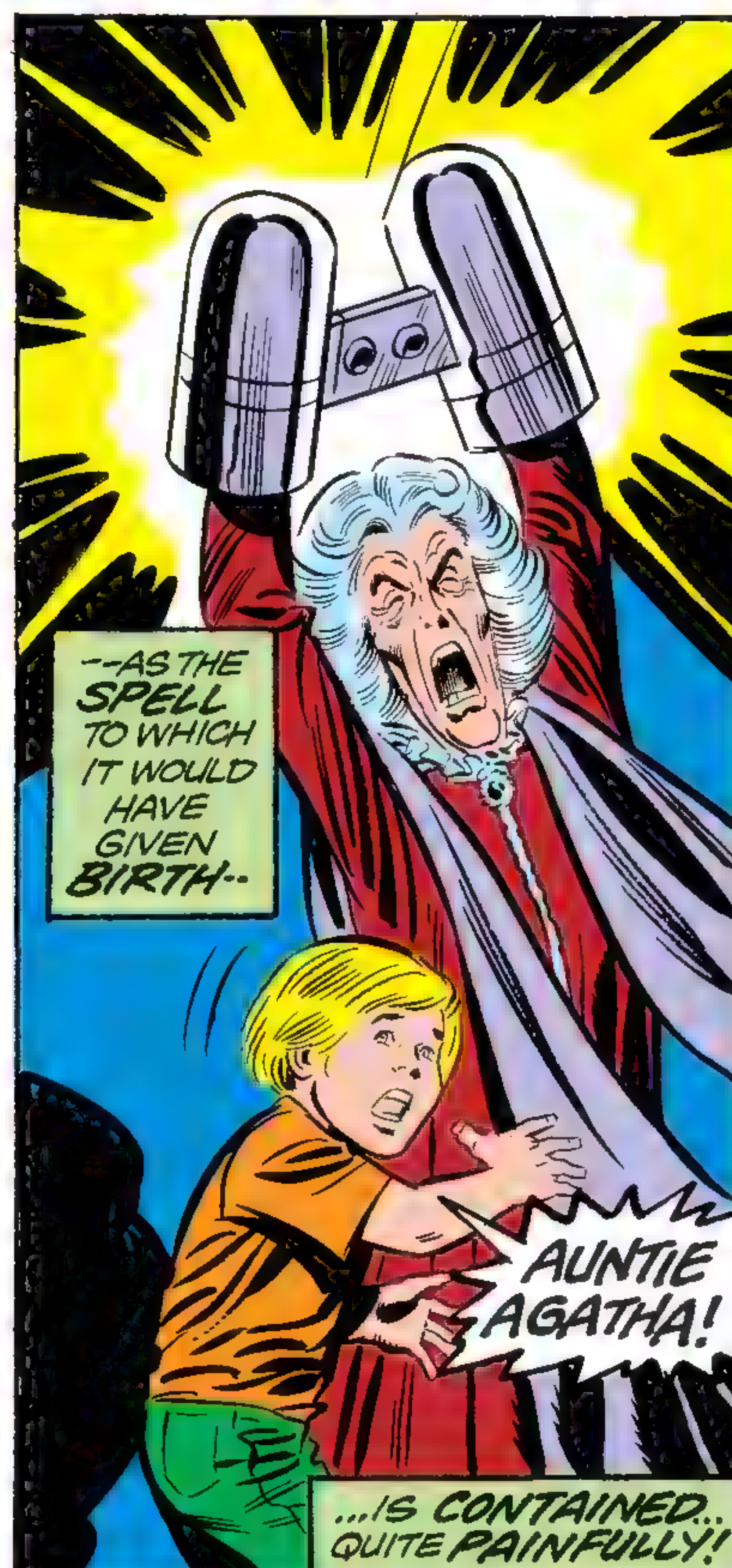
--AS THEY ARE SNUFFED
OUT IN THE PALM OF A
BLACK-GLOVED HAND!

FRANKLIN!
GET
BEHIND
ME! MY
NEXT
SPELL
MUST BE--



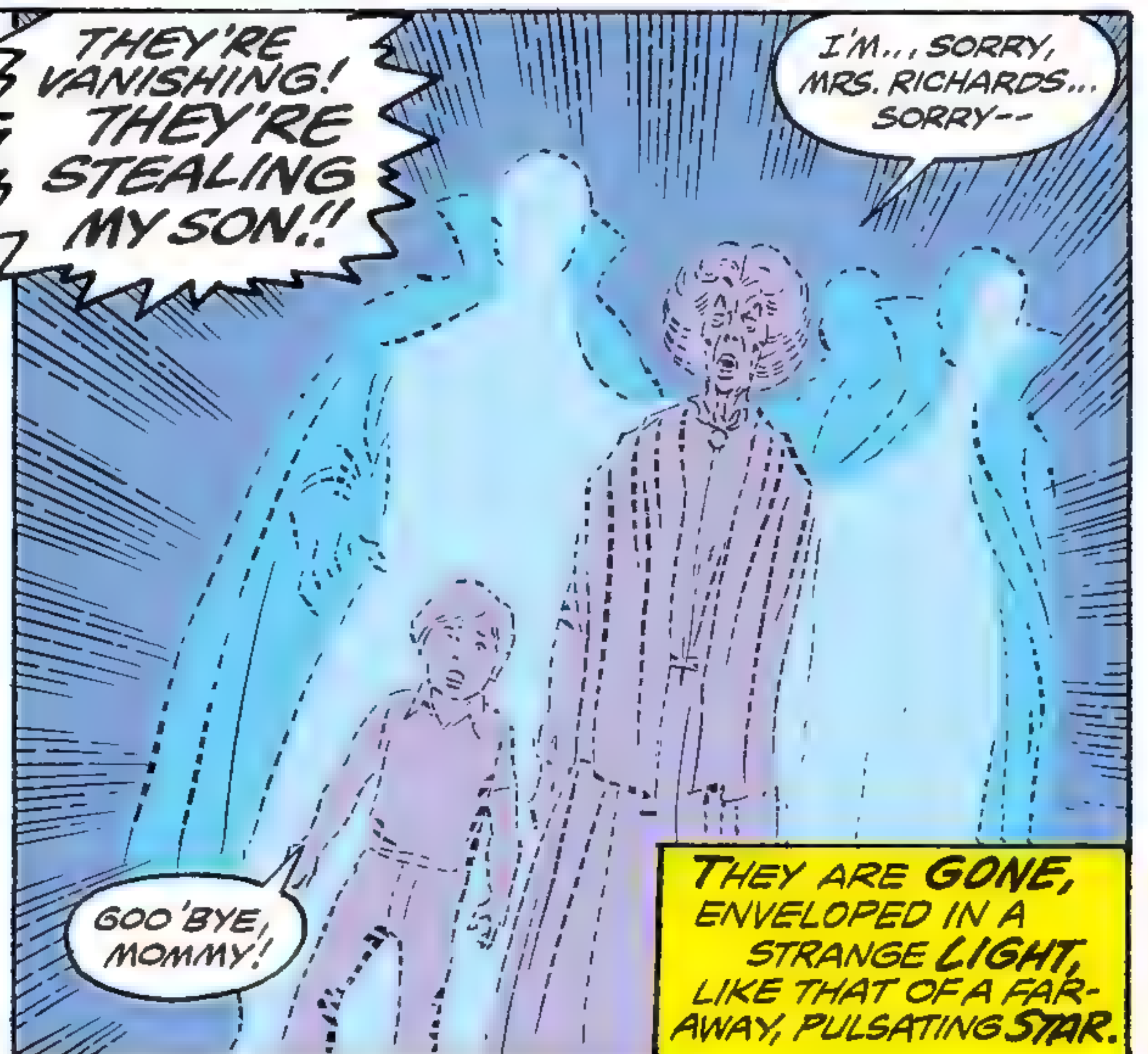
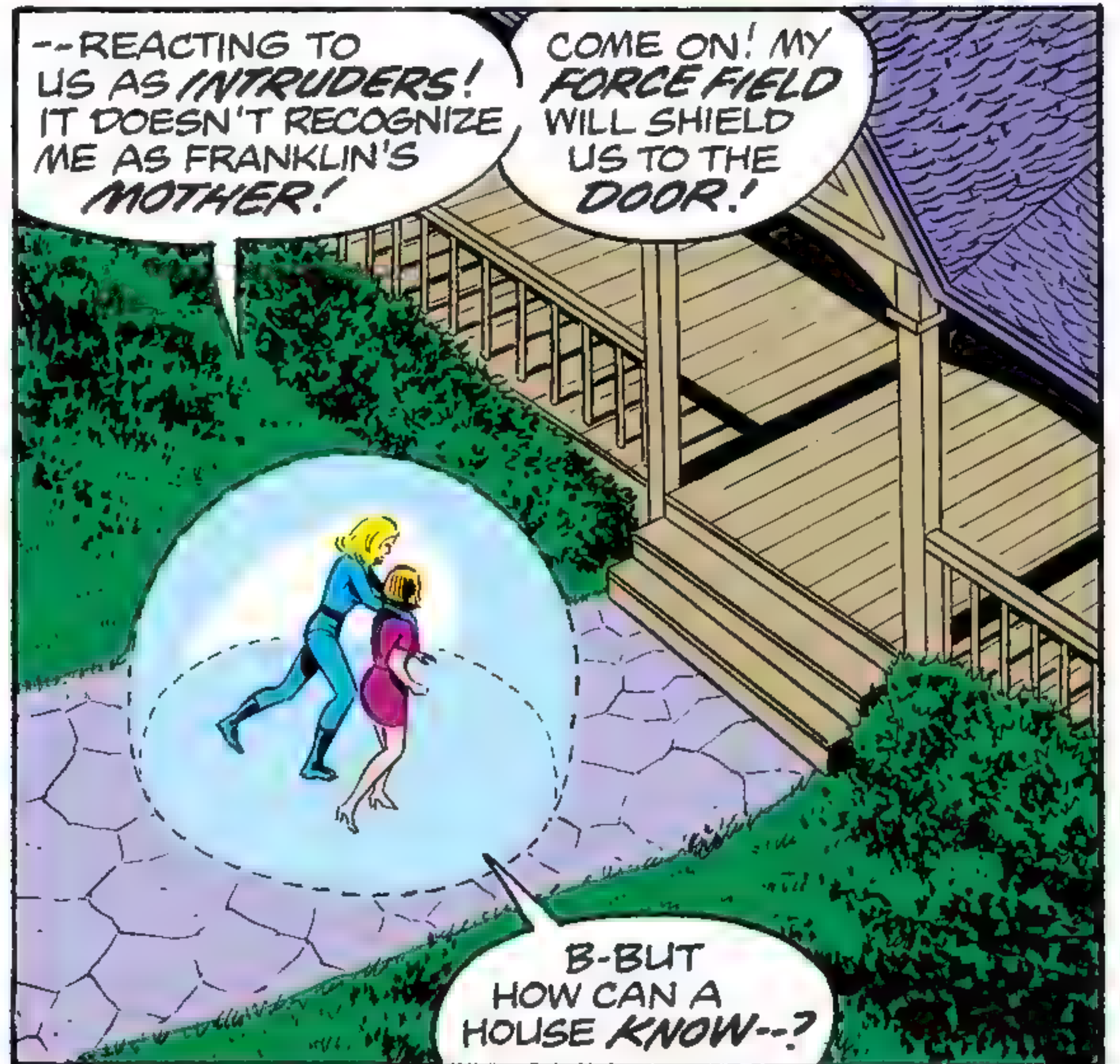
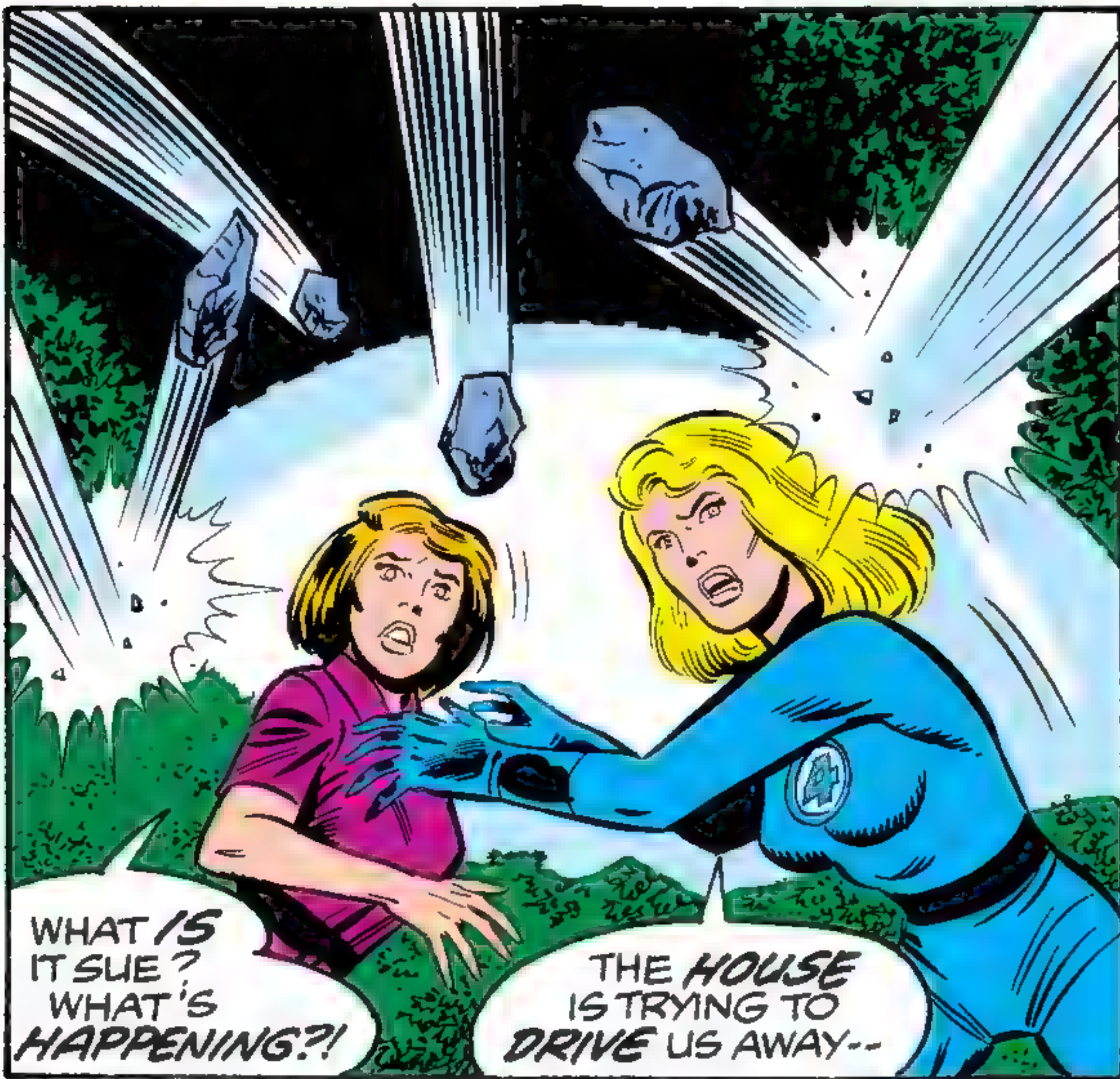
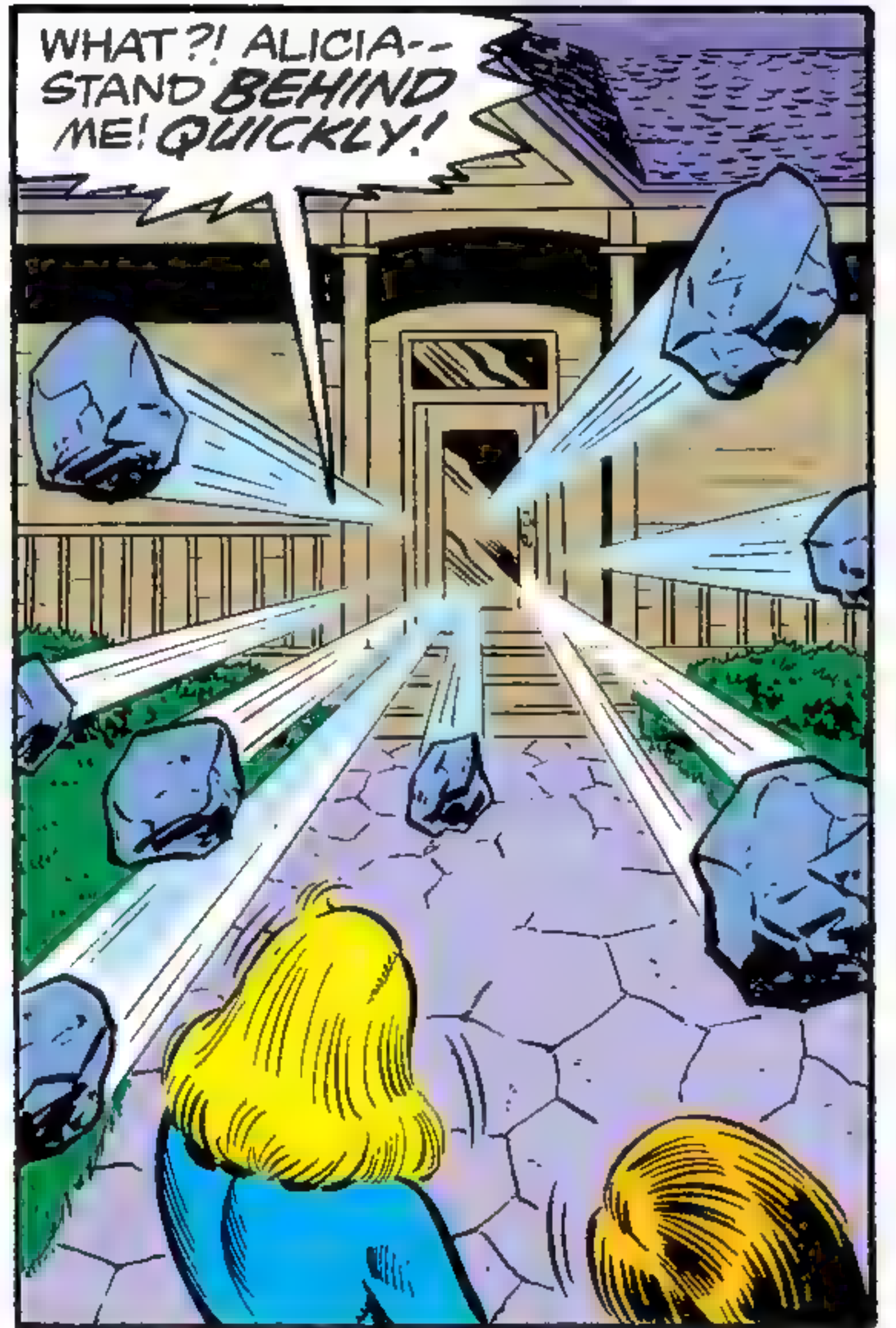
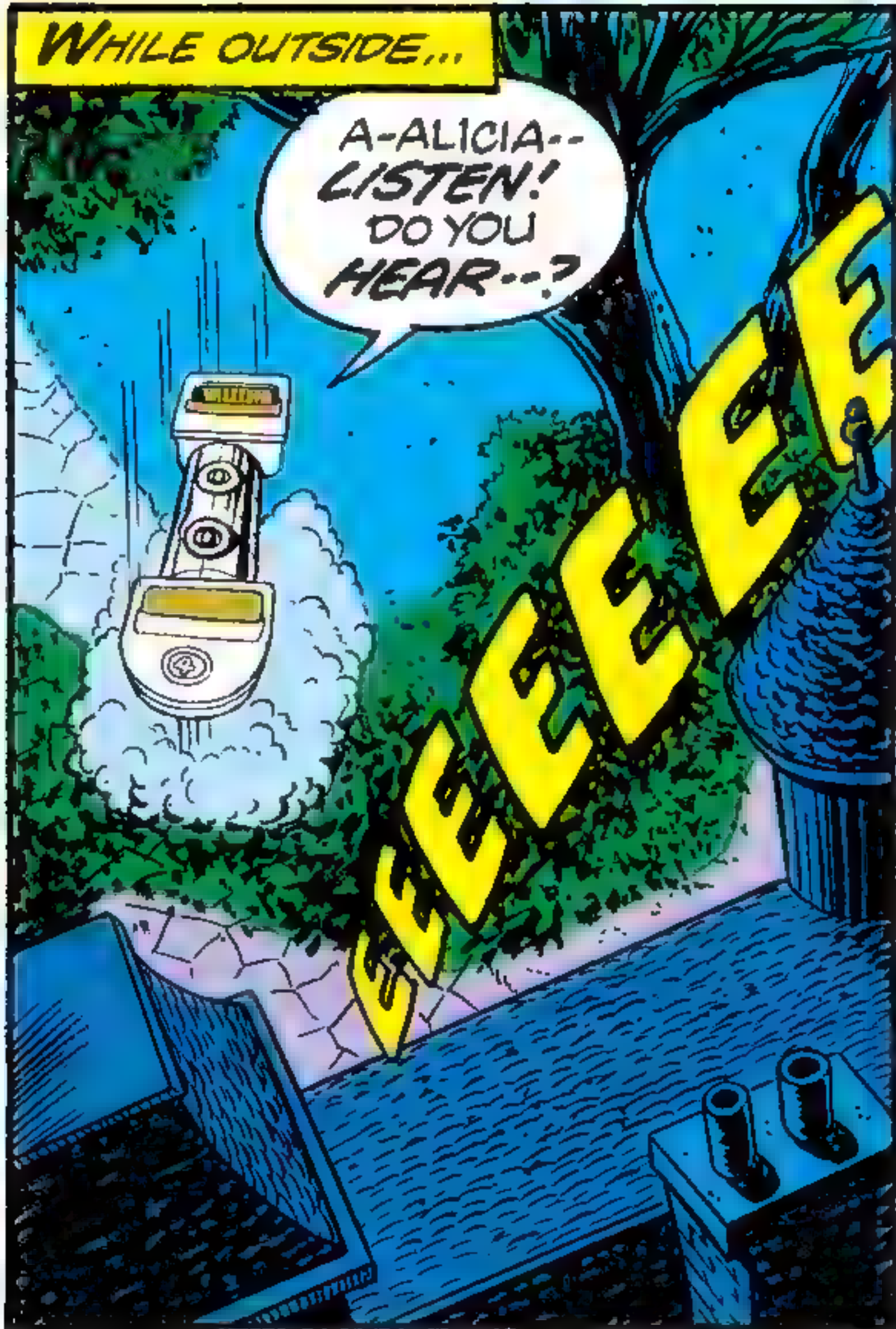
BUT THE INCANTATION
THAT WAS TO FOLLOW IS
NEVER VOICED--

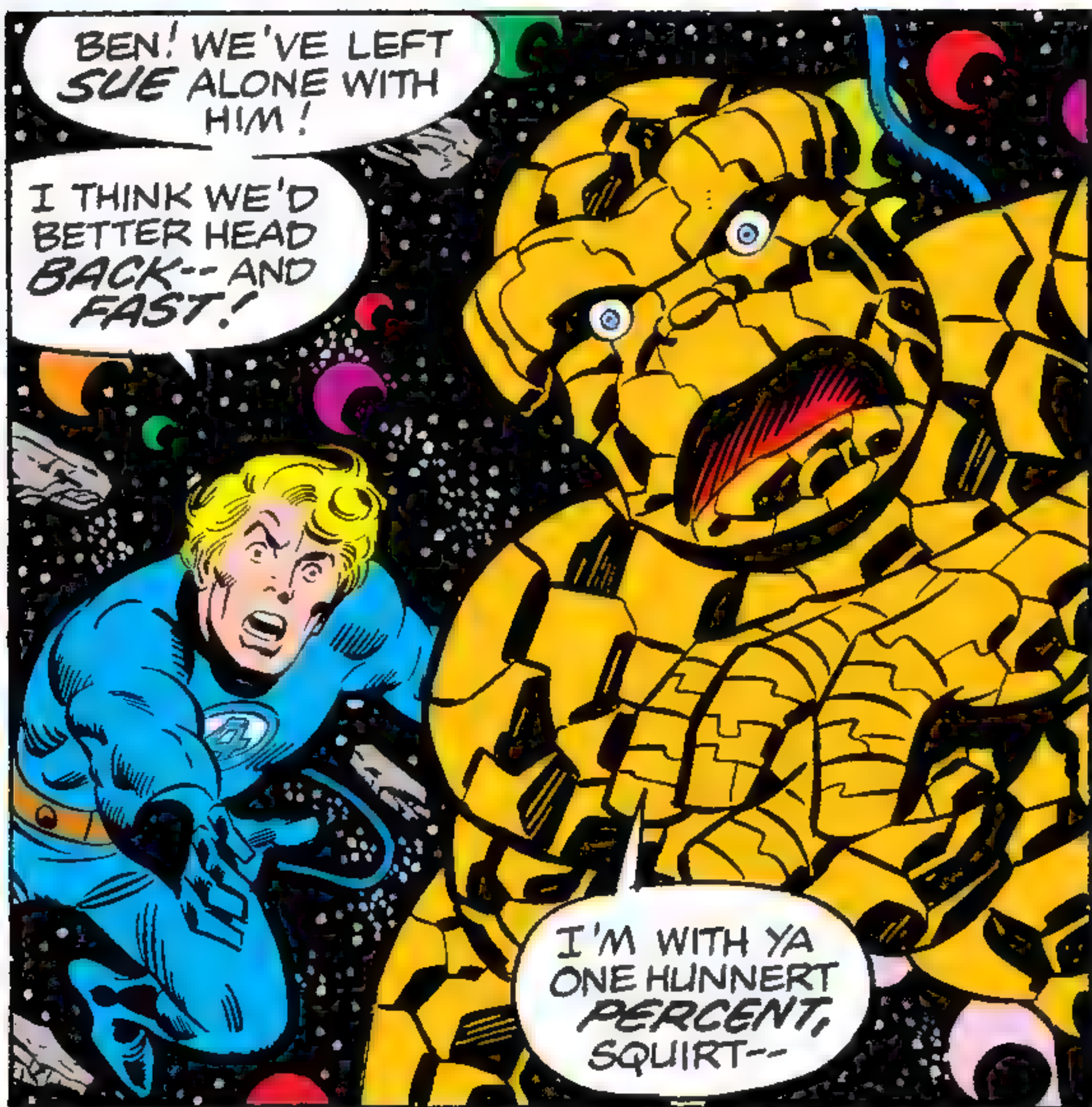
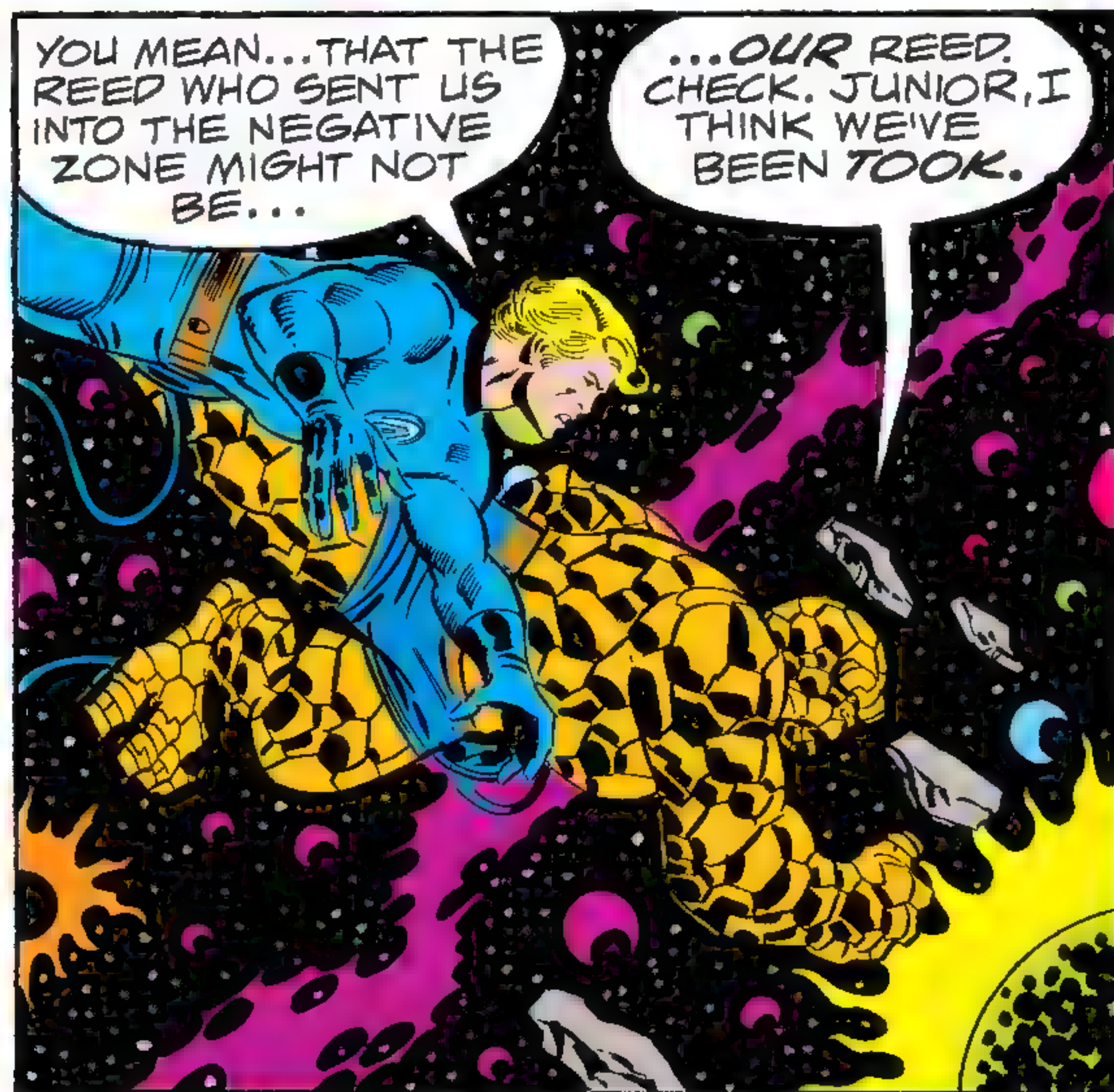
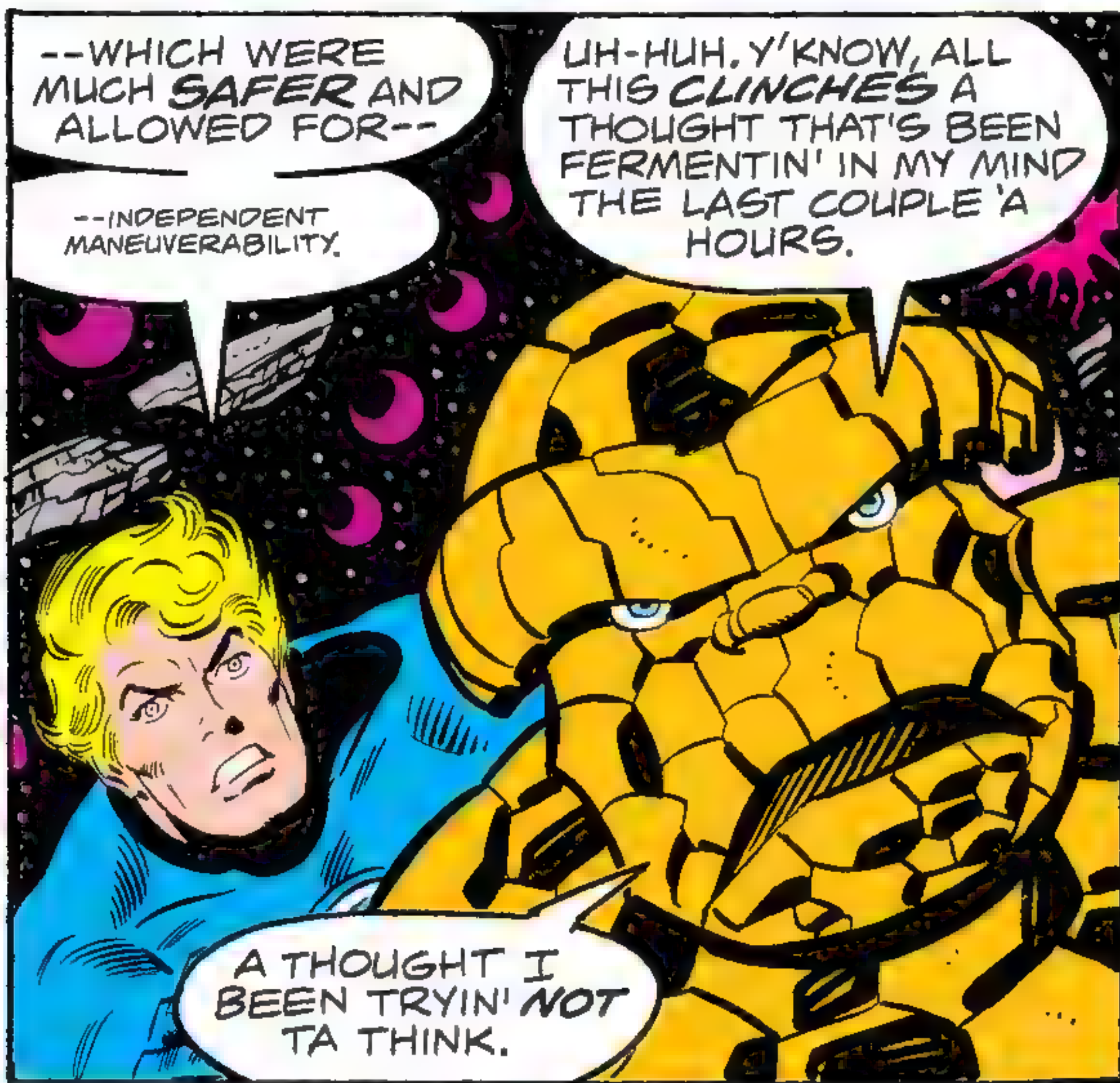
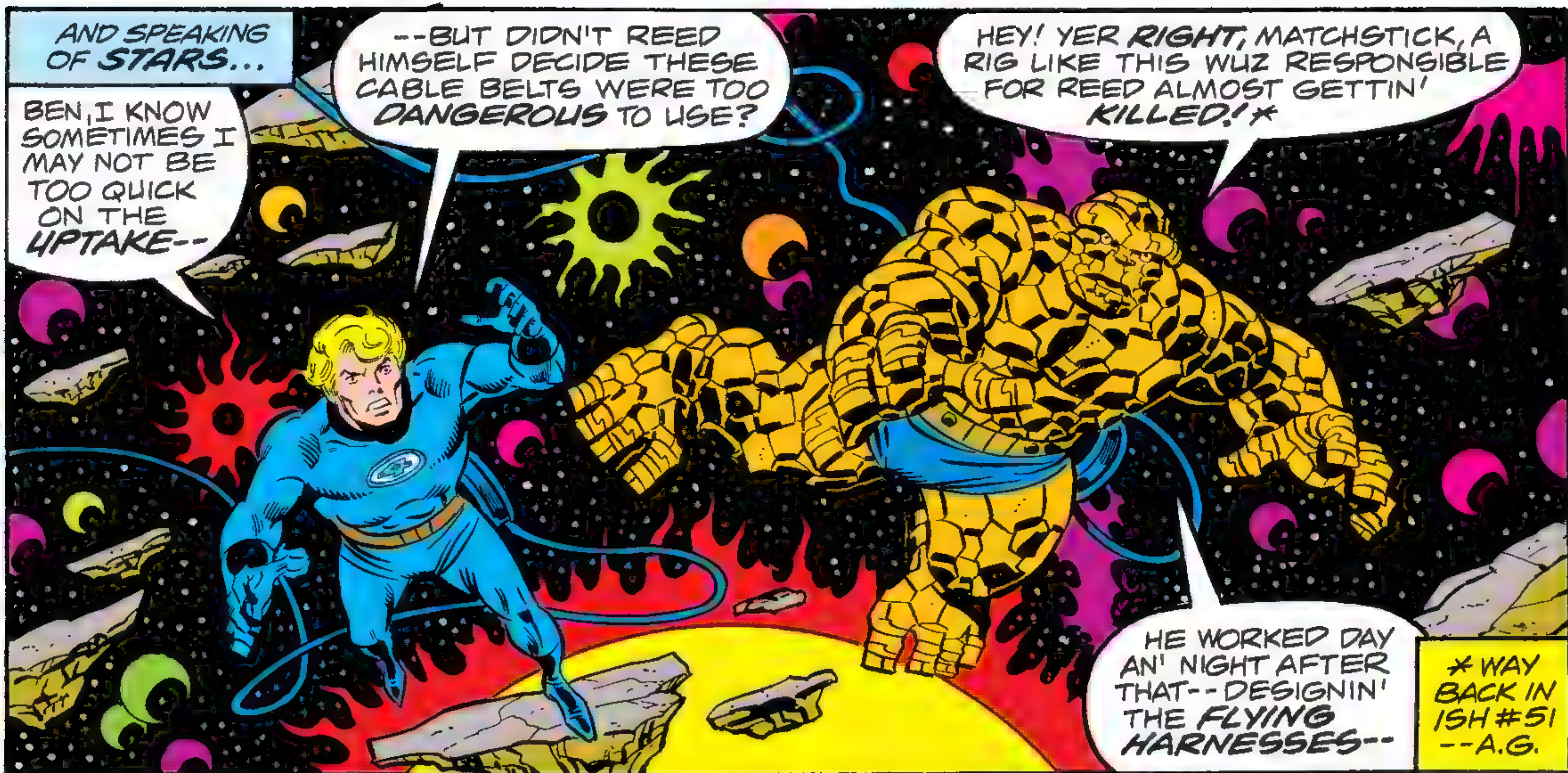
--AS THE
SPELL
TO WHICH
IT WOULD
HAVE
GIVEN
BIRTH--



AUNTIE
AGATHA!

...IS CONTAINED...
QUITE PAINFULLY!

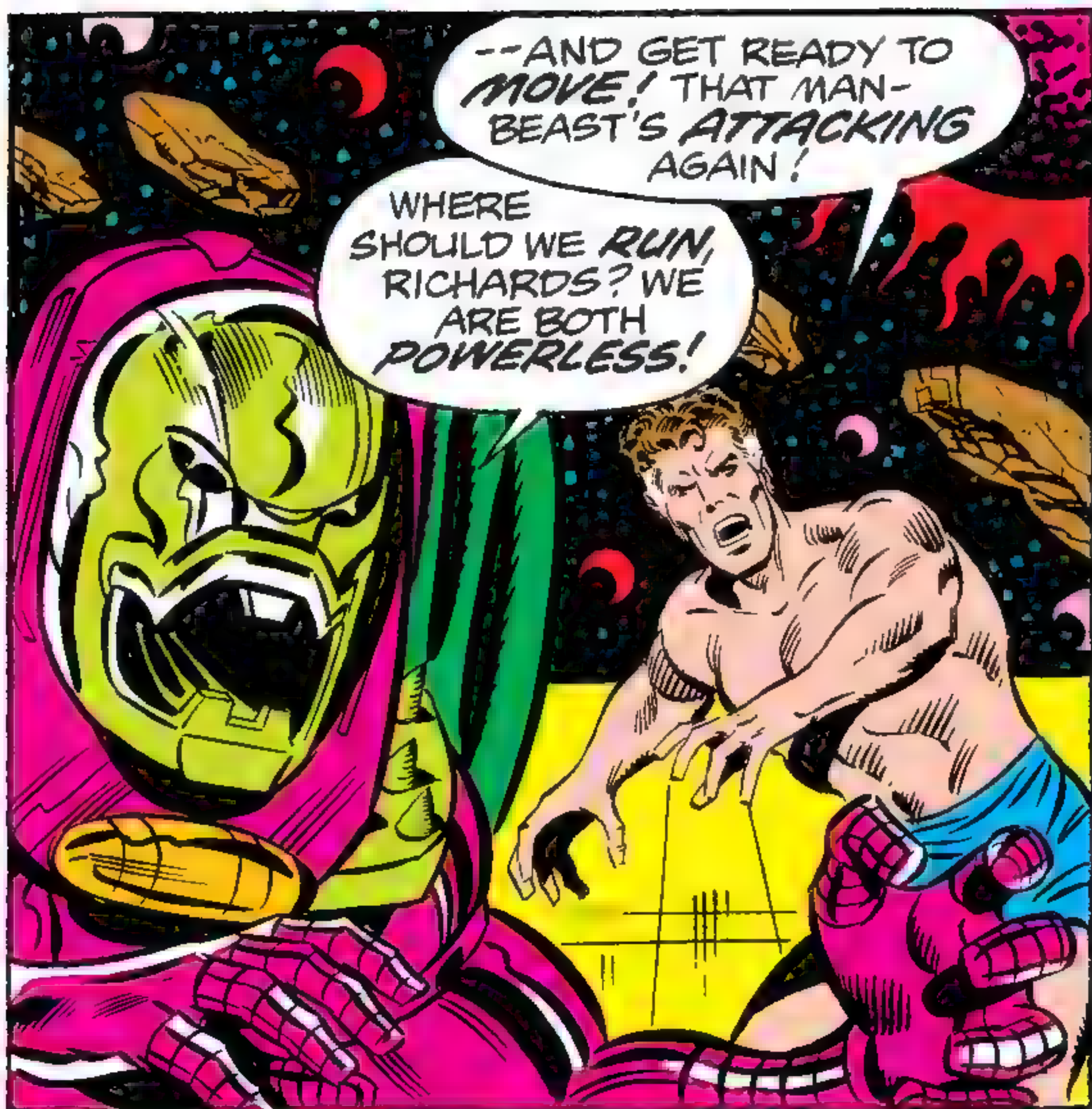




AN' THEY'RE BOTH
GETTIN' PULVERIZED
BY A' ARMOR-
WEARIN' STAND-IN
FOR THE
**SON O'
KONG!!**

CURSE YOU,
CREATURE! IF THE
POWER OF THE
COSMIC CONTROL
ROD WERE MINE
AGAIN--!

BUT IT'S
NOT
ANNIHILUS,
SO SAVE
YOUR
BREATH--



--AND GET READY TO MOVE! THAT MAN-BEAST'S ATTACKING AGAIN!

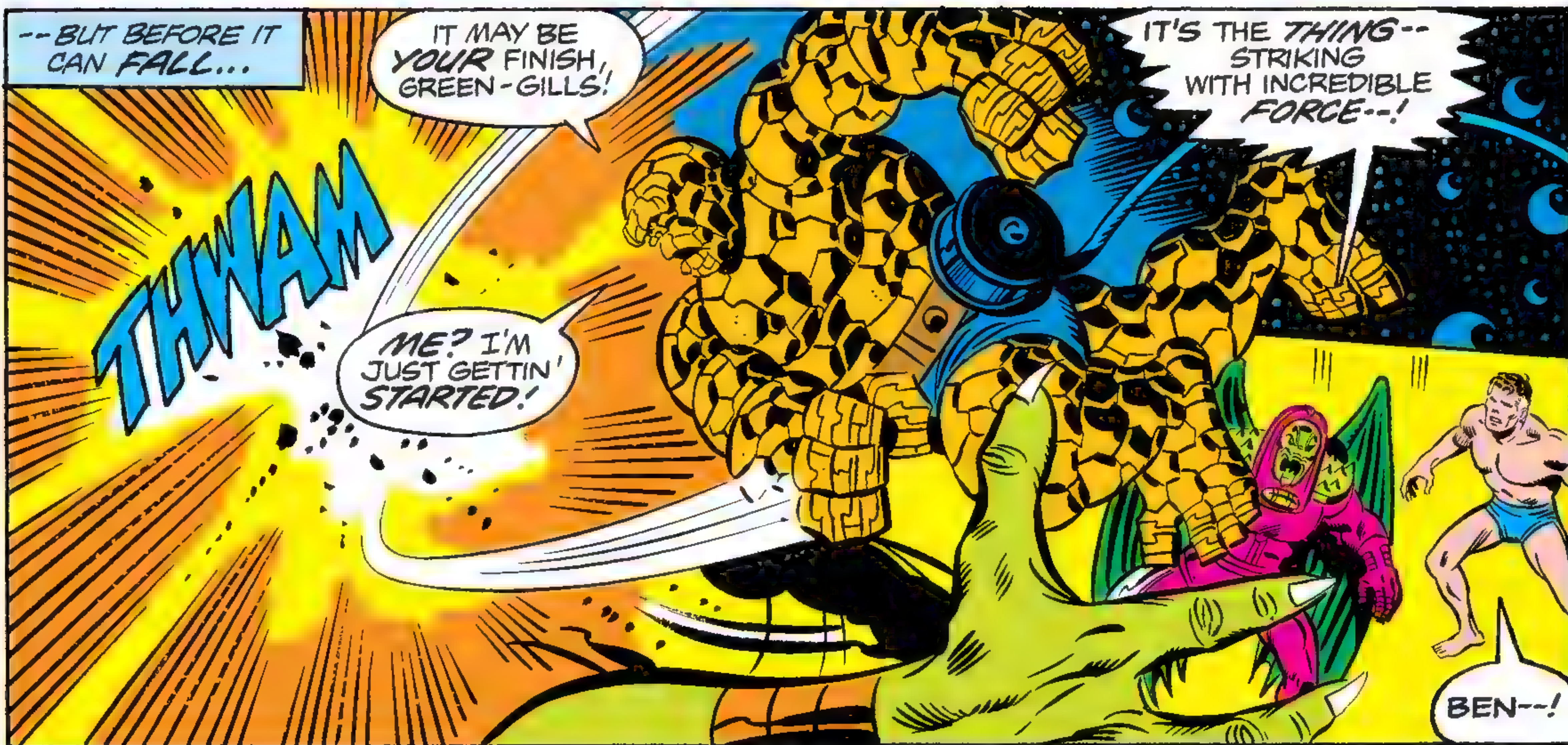
WHERE SHOULD WE RUN, RICHARDS? WE ARE BOTH POWERLESS!



"THIS IS OUR FINISH!"

FOR ONCE REED RICHARDS HAS NOTHING TO SAY.

THE HUGE HAND LIFTS HIGH--



--BUT BEFORE IT CAN FALL...

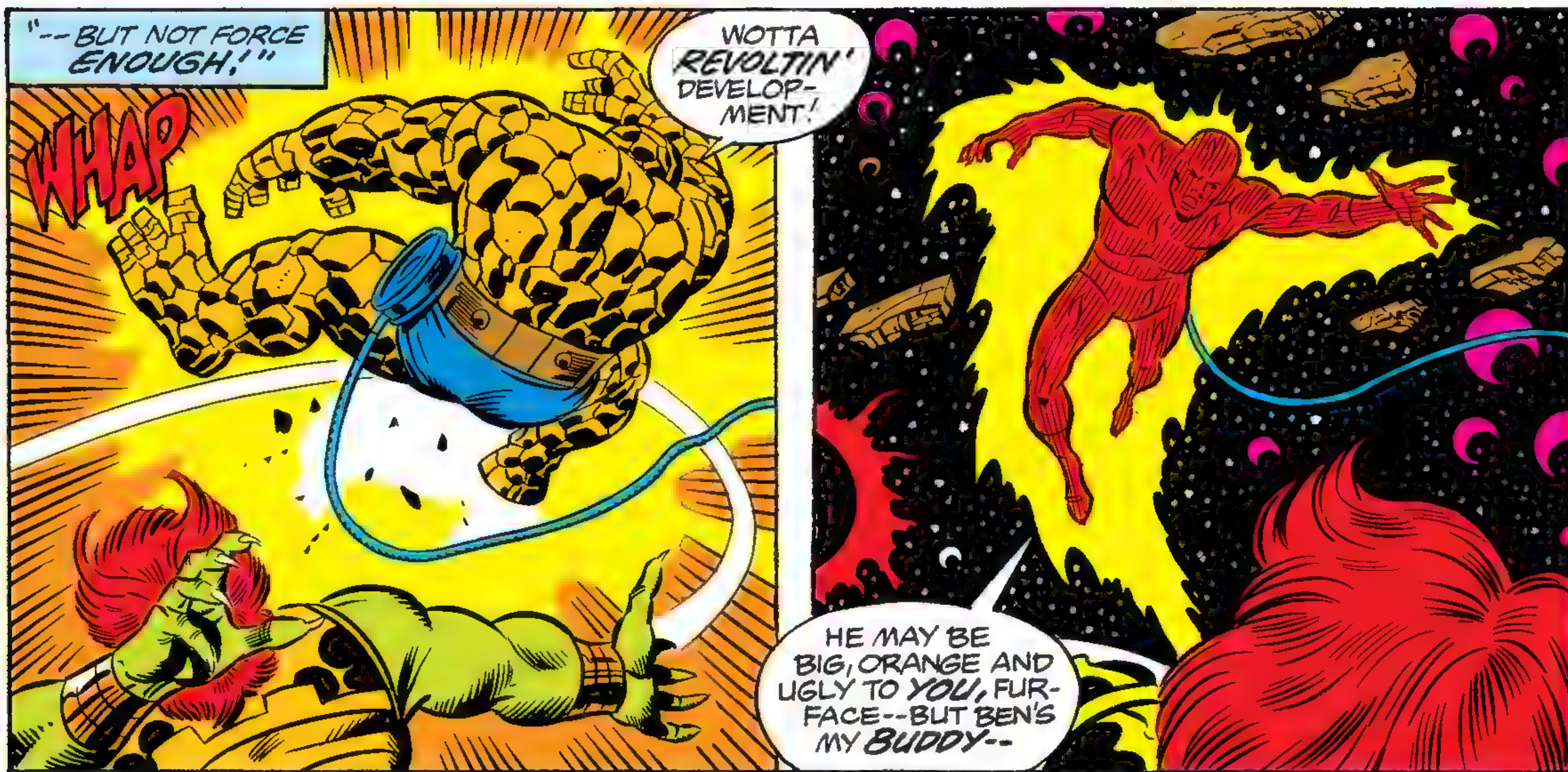
IT MAY BE YOUR FINISH, GREEN-GILLS!

IT'S THE THING-- STRIKING WITH INCREDIBLE FORCE--!

THWAM

ME? I'M JUST GETTIN' STARTED!

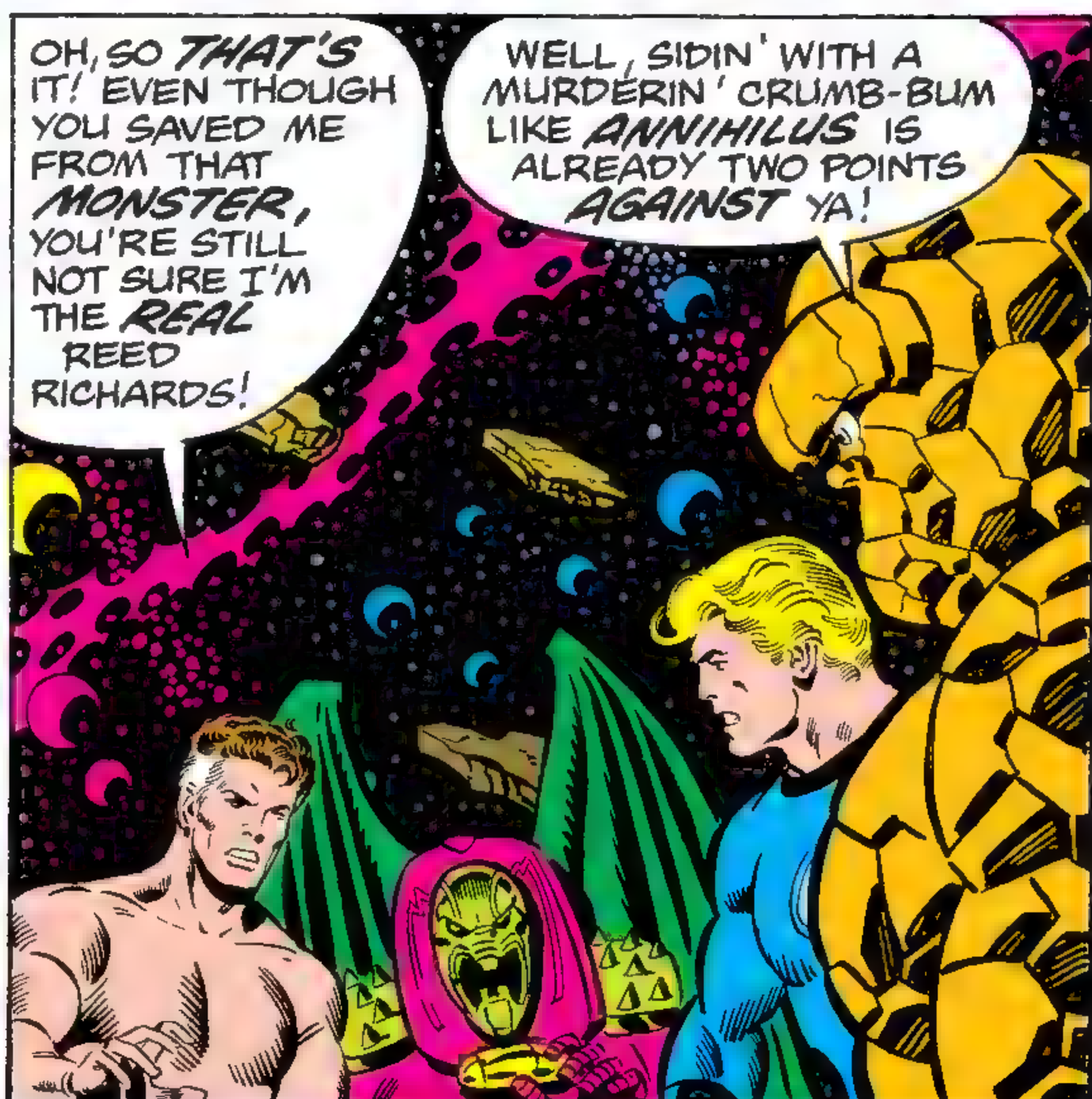
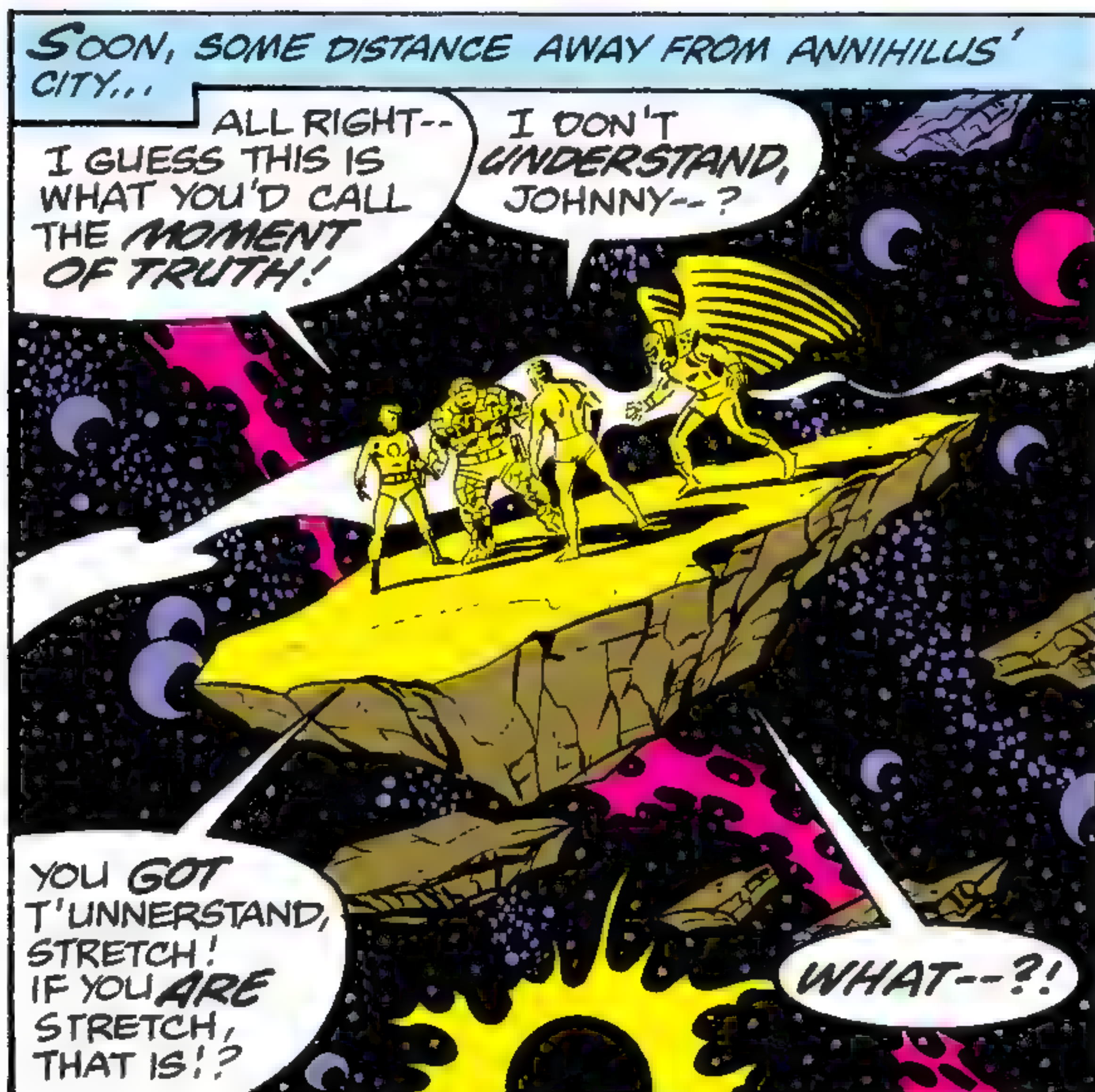
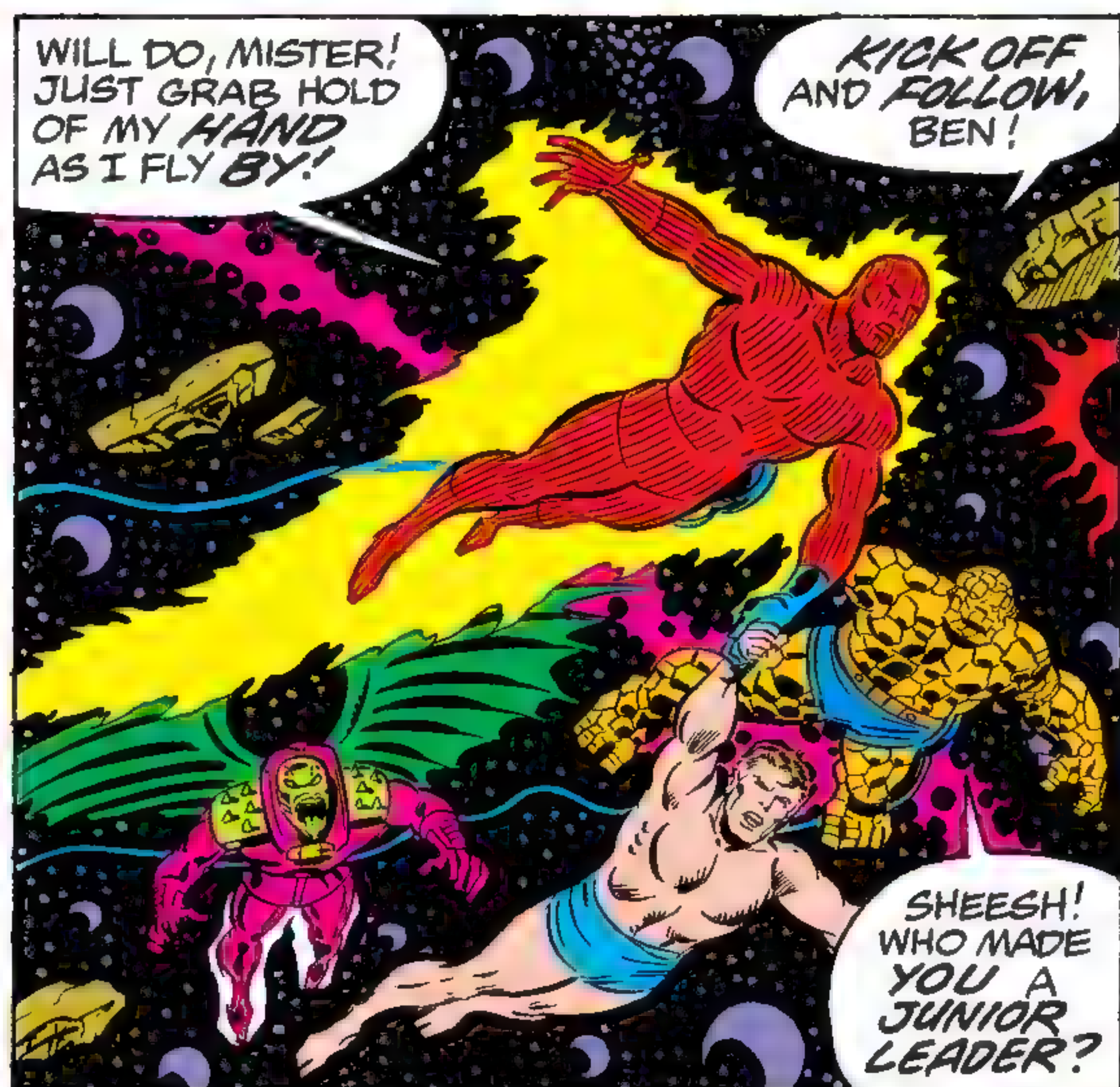
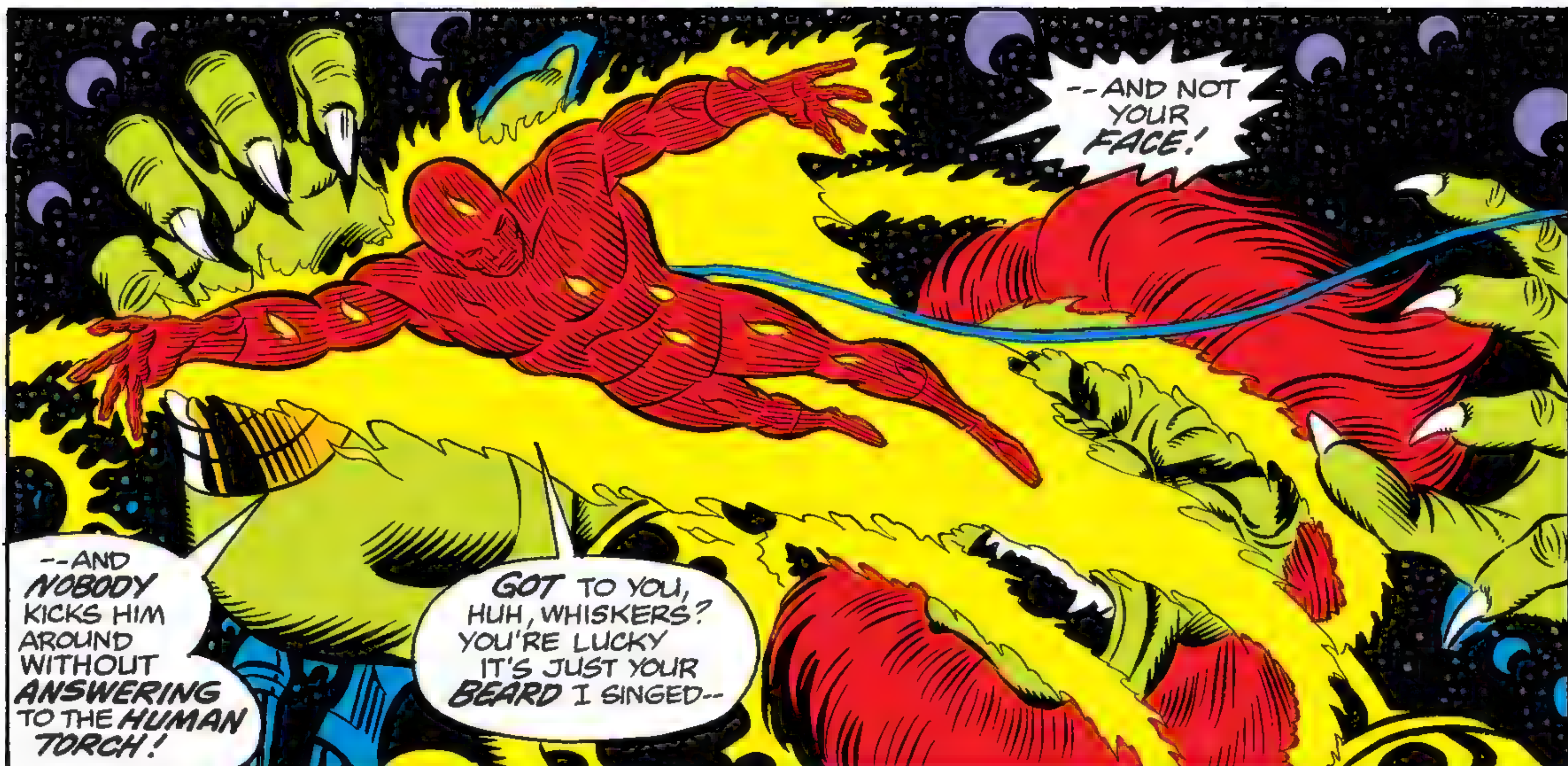
BEN--!



--BUT NOT FORCE ENOUGH!"

WOTTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT!

HE MAY BE BIG, ORANGE AND UGLY TO YOU, FUR-FACE--BUT BEN'S MY BUDDY--





YEAH... OUR REED WOULD NEVER--

HE WOULD IF THE CAUSE ANNIHILUS WAS FIGHTING WERE JUST!

FOOLS! DID YOU NOT SEE THE GIANT ATTACKING US--WHO STOLE THE POWER OF MY CONTROL ROD AND USURPED MY KINGDOM--?!

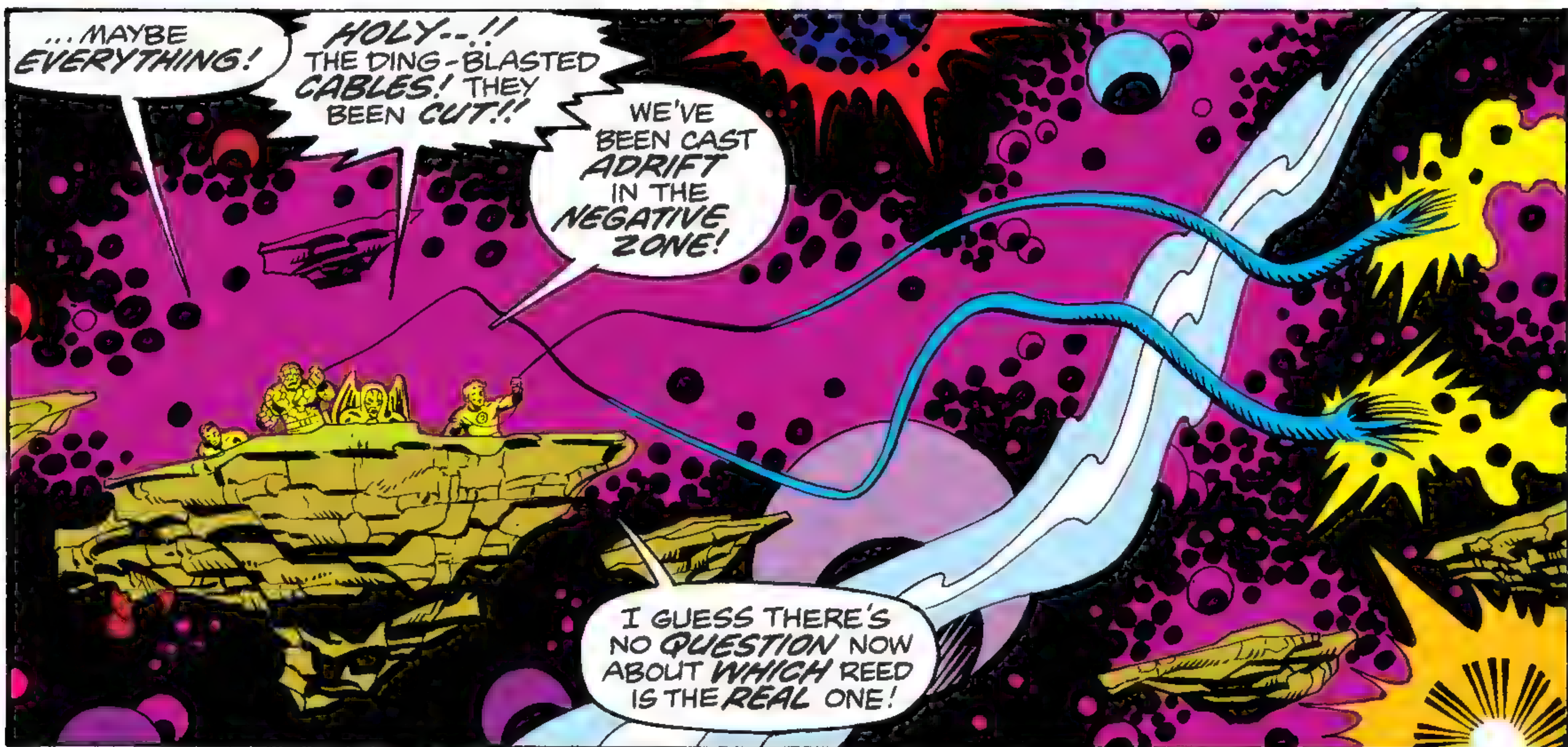


THEY DID, BUT WE COULD HAVE SET THAT UP-- MADE IT LOOK AS IF WE WERE ENDANGERED TO WIN THEIR TRUST! BUT I JUST NOTICED SOMETHING!

BEN, JOHNNY, TUG ON YOUR BELT-CABLES!

I DON'T GET IT! WHAT'LL THAT PROVE?

MAYBE NOTHING, BEN...



...MAYBE EVERYTHING!

HOLY--!! THE DING-BLASTED CABLES! THEY BEEN CUT!!

WE'VE BEEN CAST ADrift IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

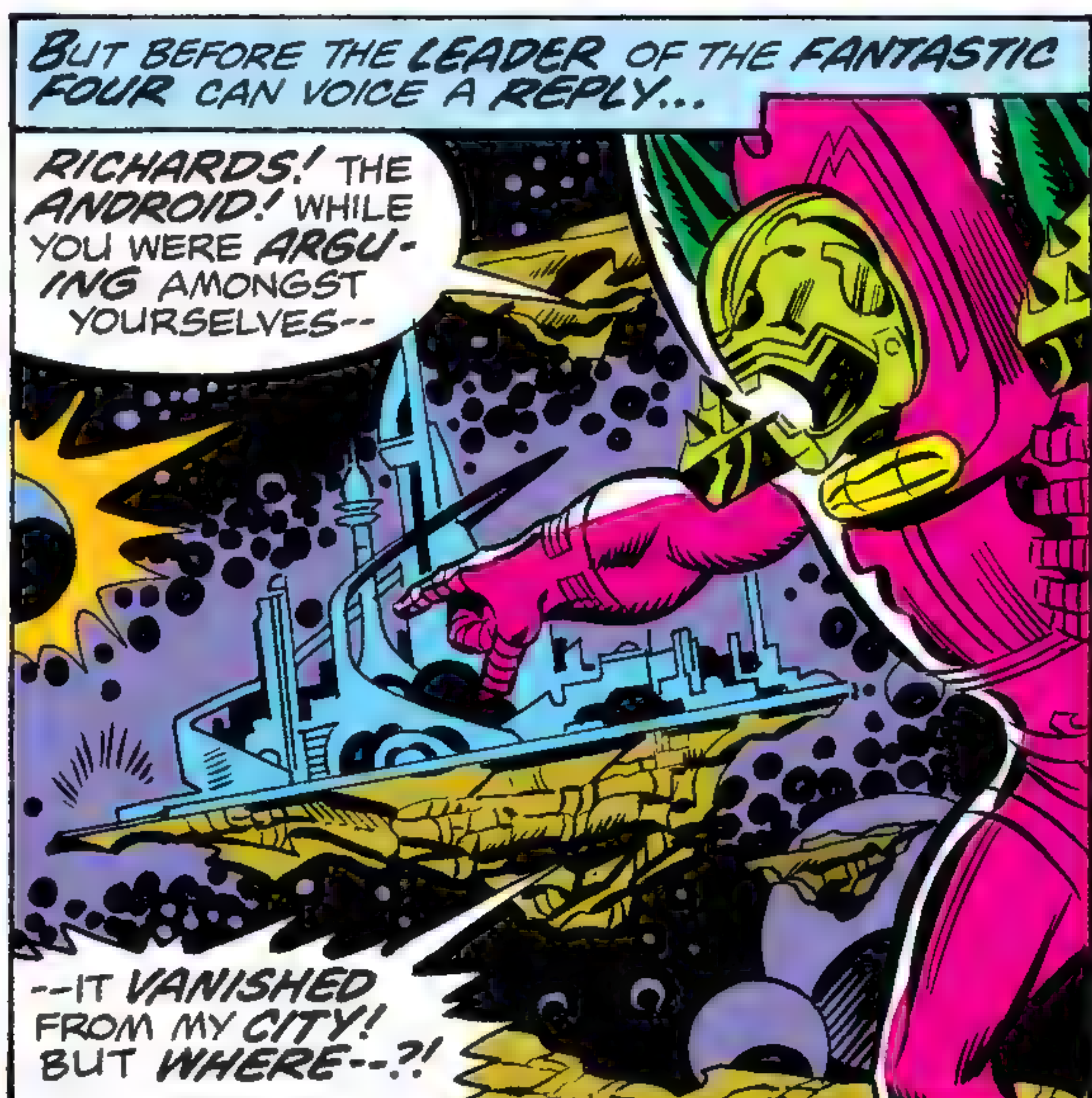
I GUESS THERE'S NO QUESTION NOW ABOUT WHICH REED IS THE REAL ONE!



AND MY COUNTER-EARTH DOUBLE-- HAVING DOOMED THE THREE OF US-- IS ALONE WITH MY WIFE AND SON!

THE DIRTY, CRAWLIN'-- AH, THERE JUST AIN'T NO WORDS STRONG ENOUGH!

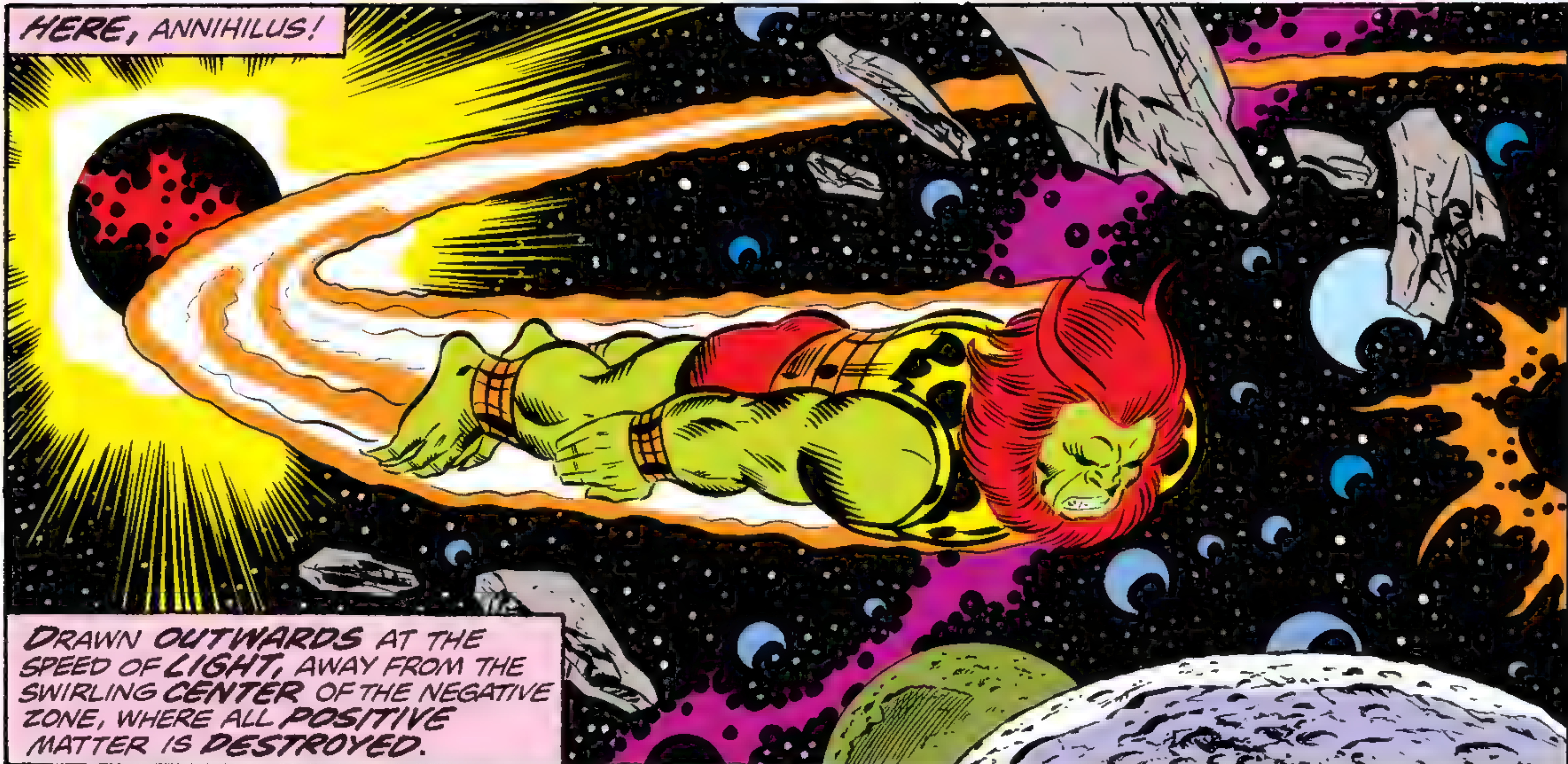
WHAT NOW, REED?



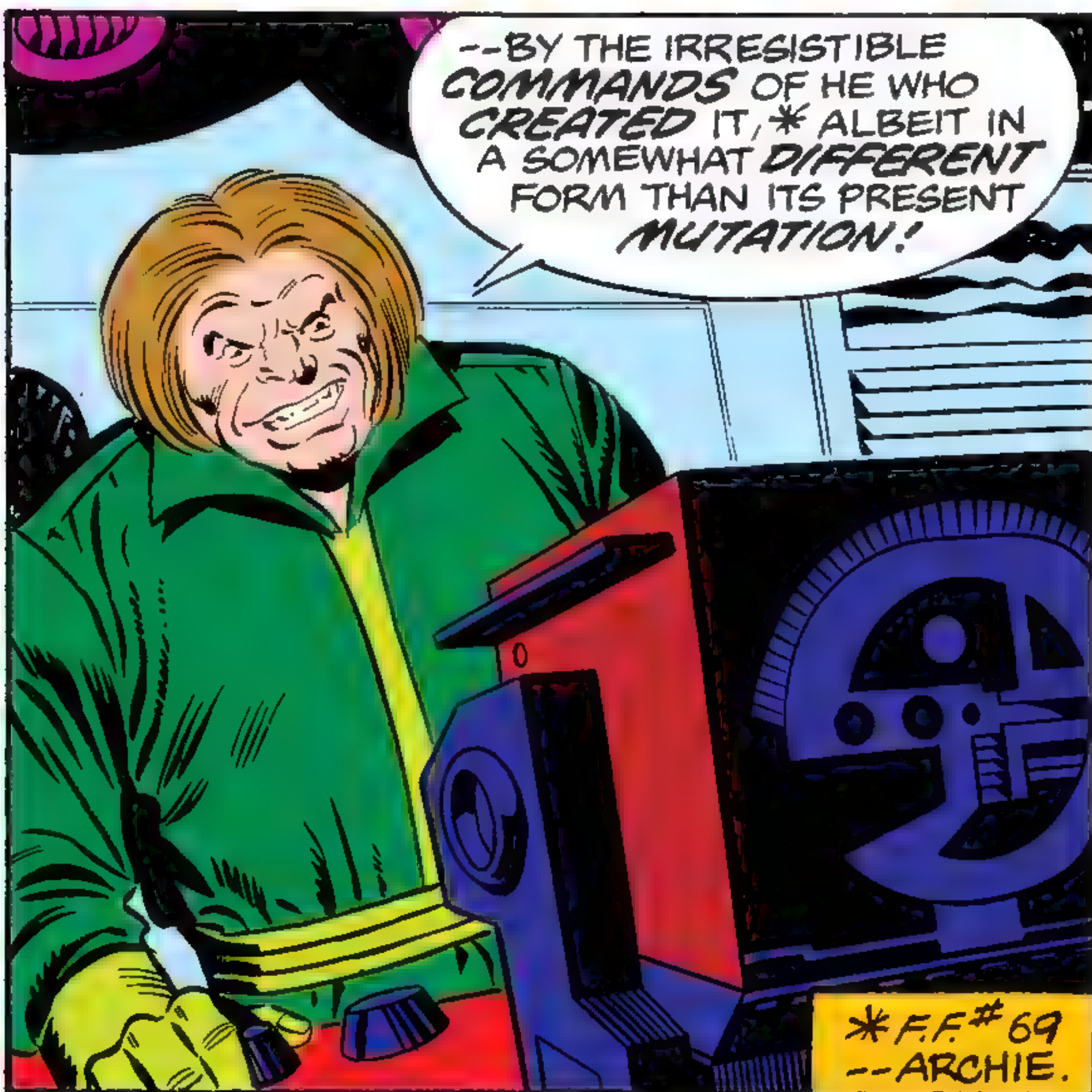
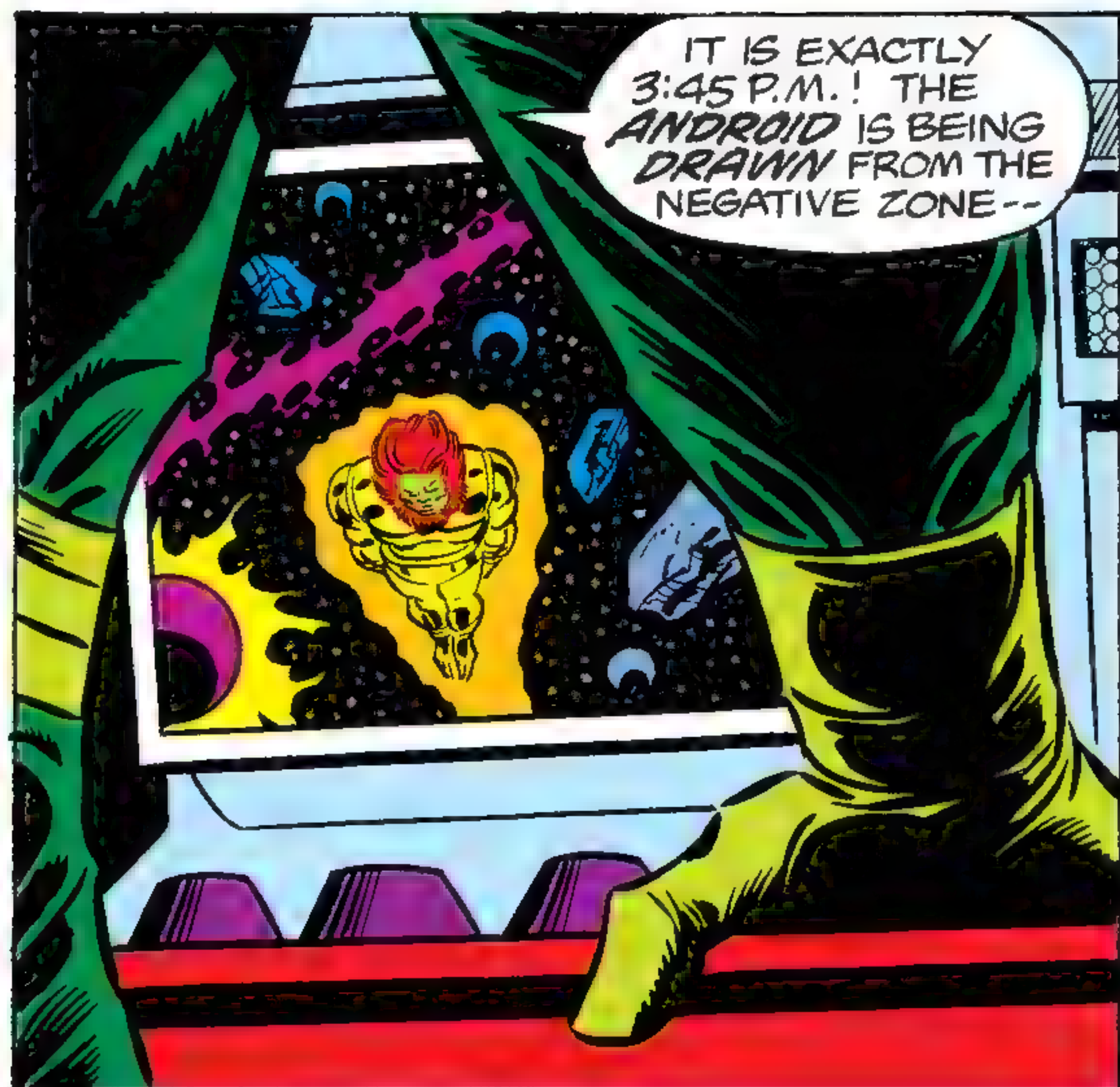
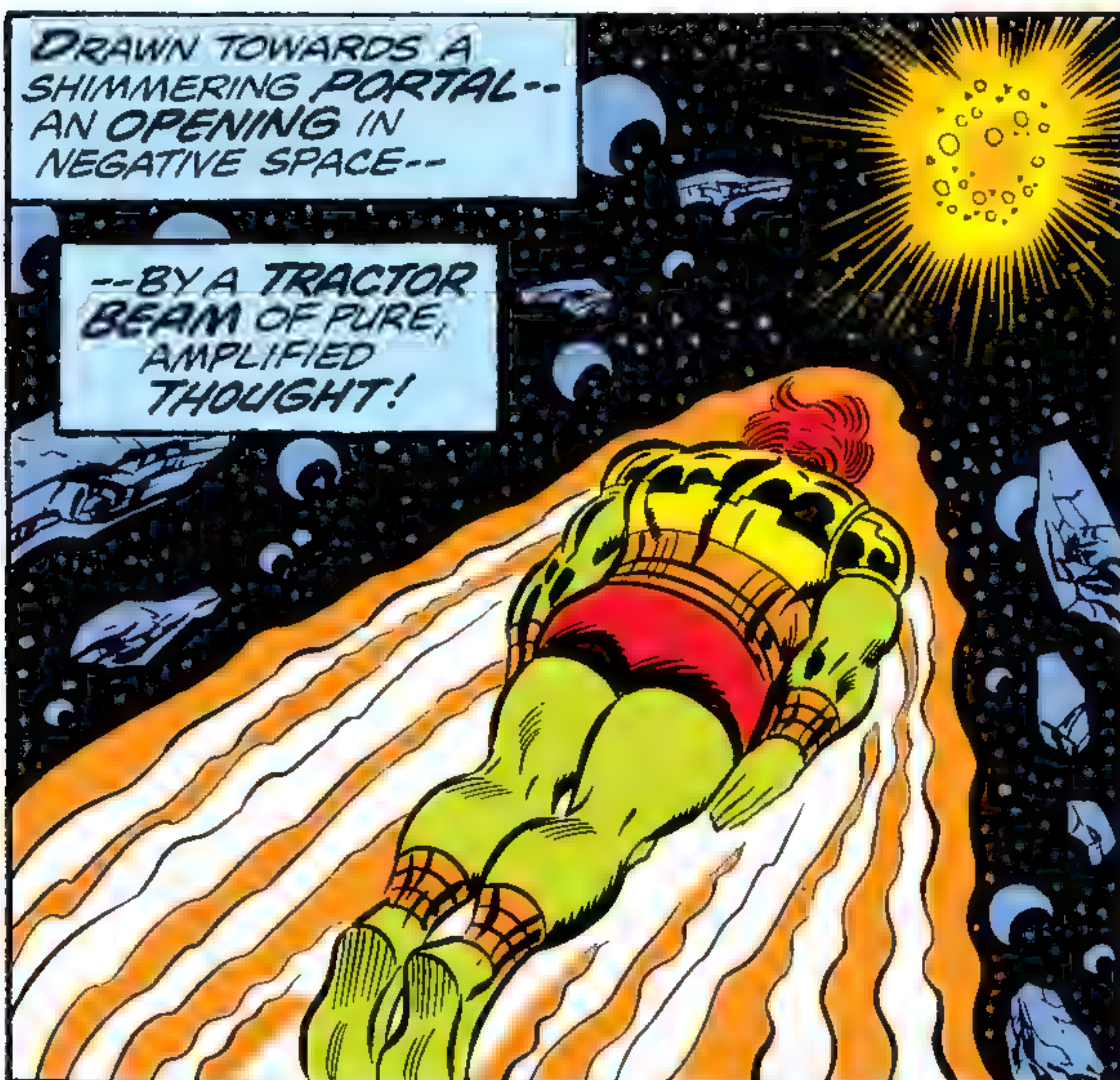
BUT BEFORE THE LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR CAN VOICE A REPLY...

RICHARDS! THE ANDROID! WHILE YOU WERE ARGUING AMONGST YOURSELVES--

--IT VANISHED FROM MY CITY! BUT WHERE--?!



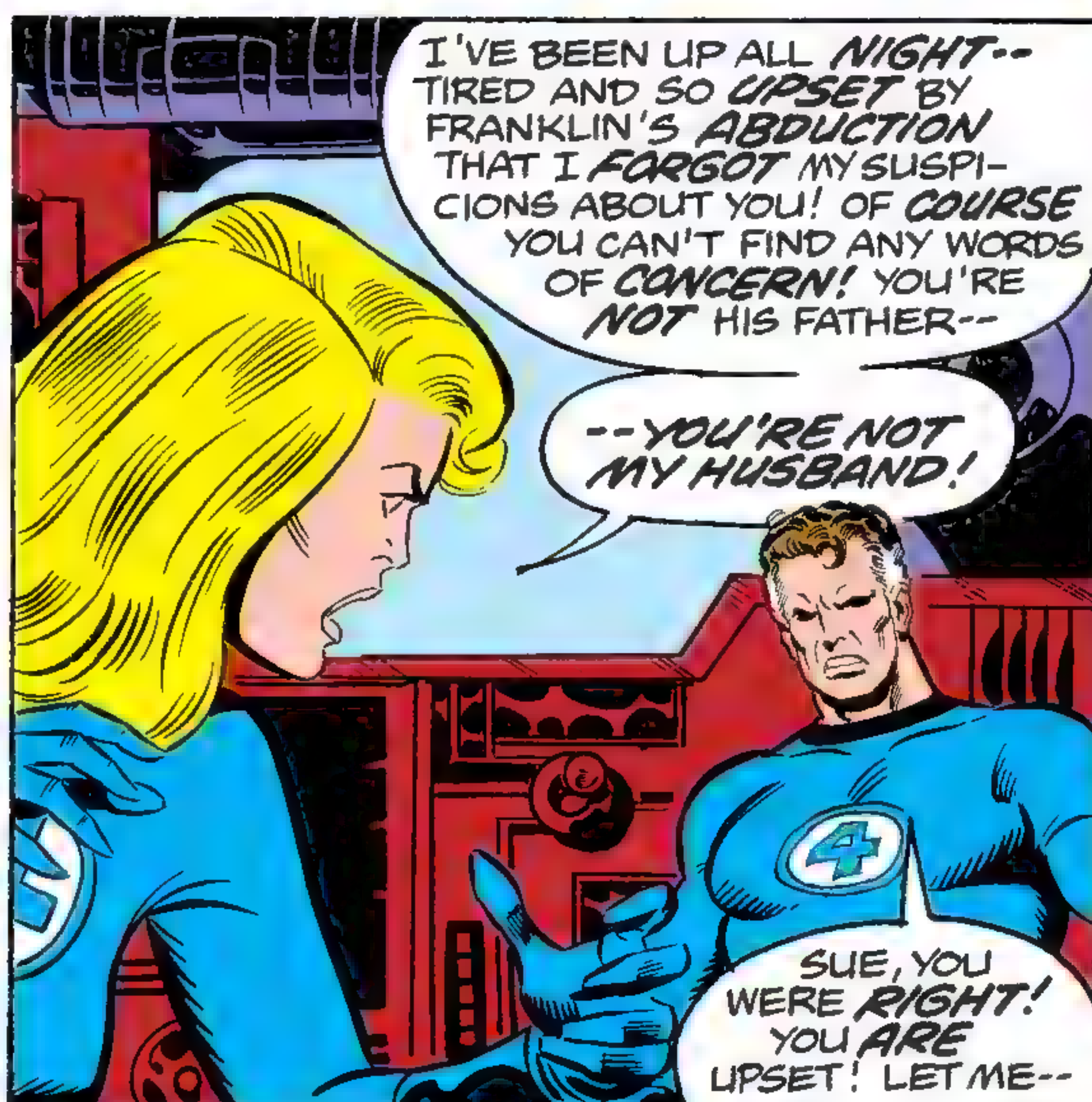
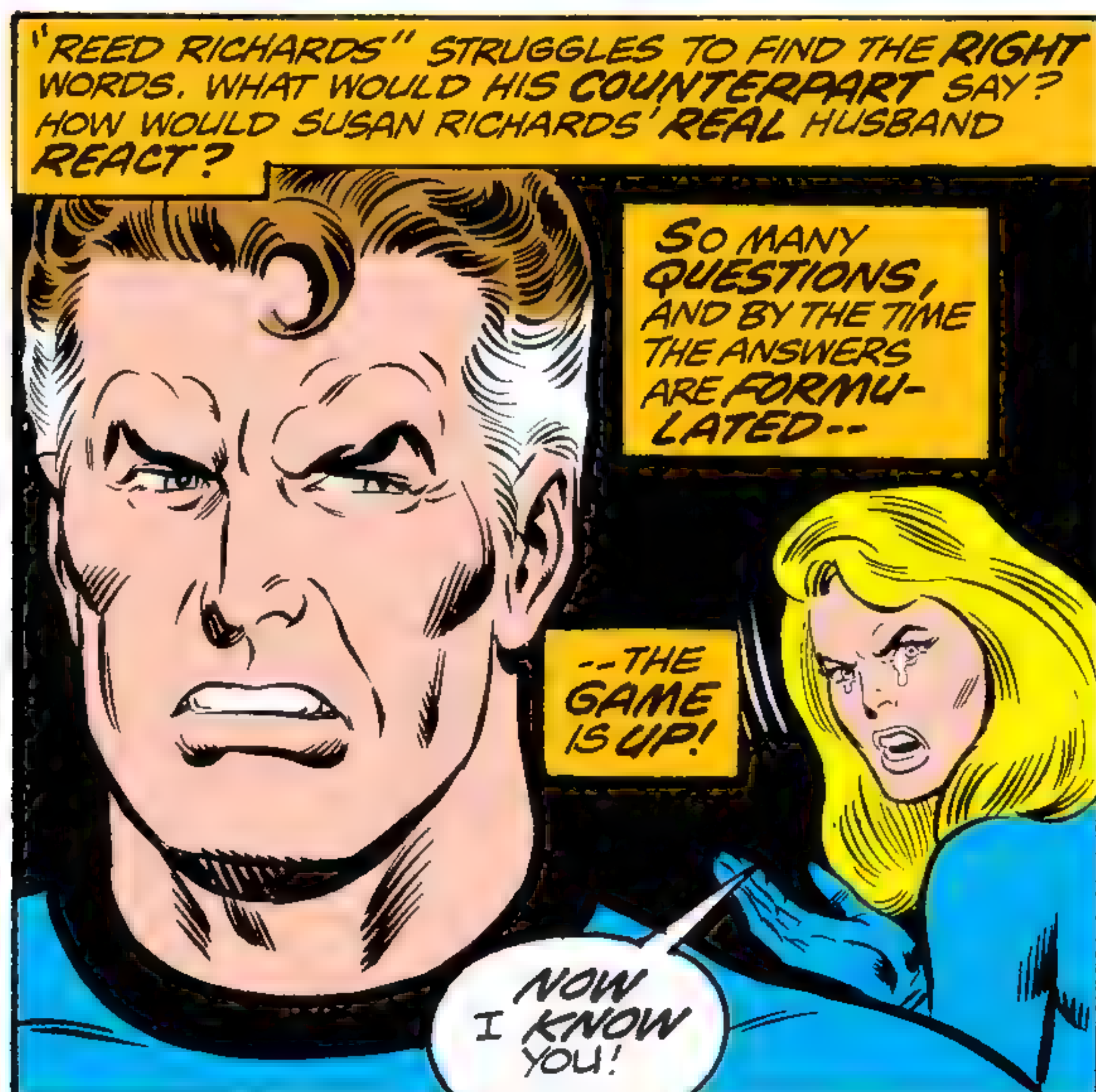
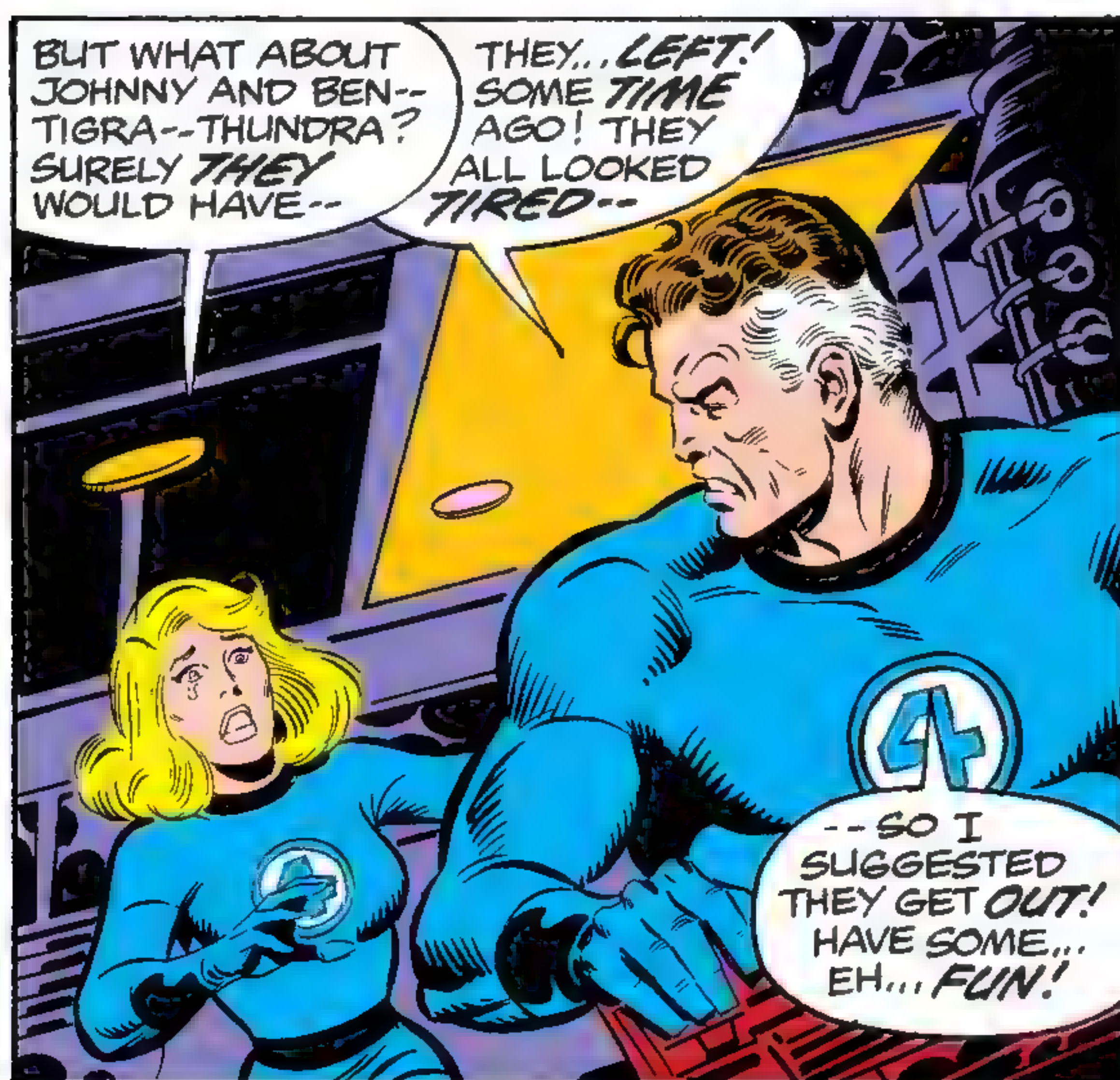
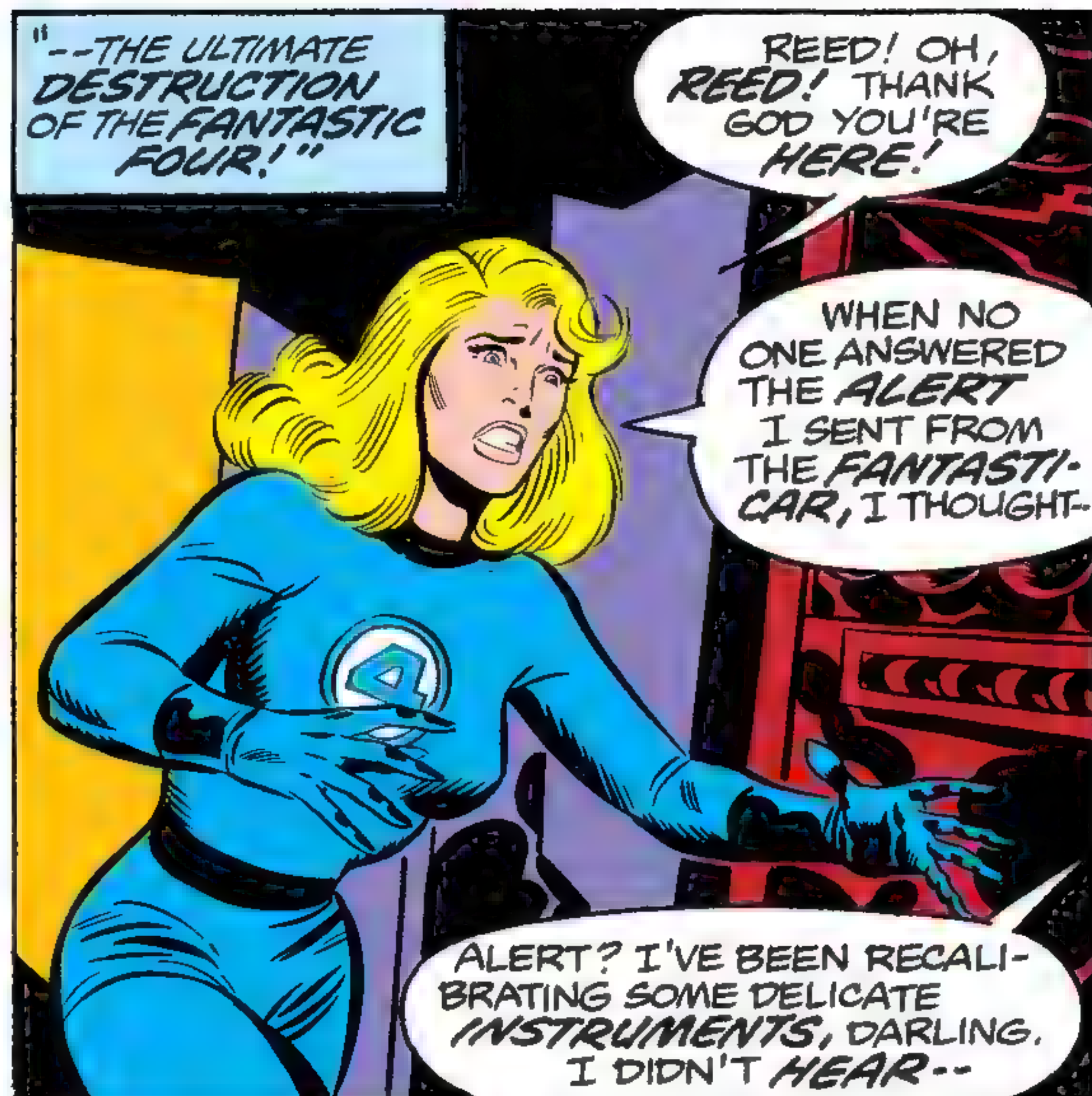
DRAWN OUTWARDS AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, AWAY FROM THE SWIRLING CENTER OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE, WHERE ALL POSITIVE MATTER IS DESTROYED.



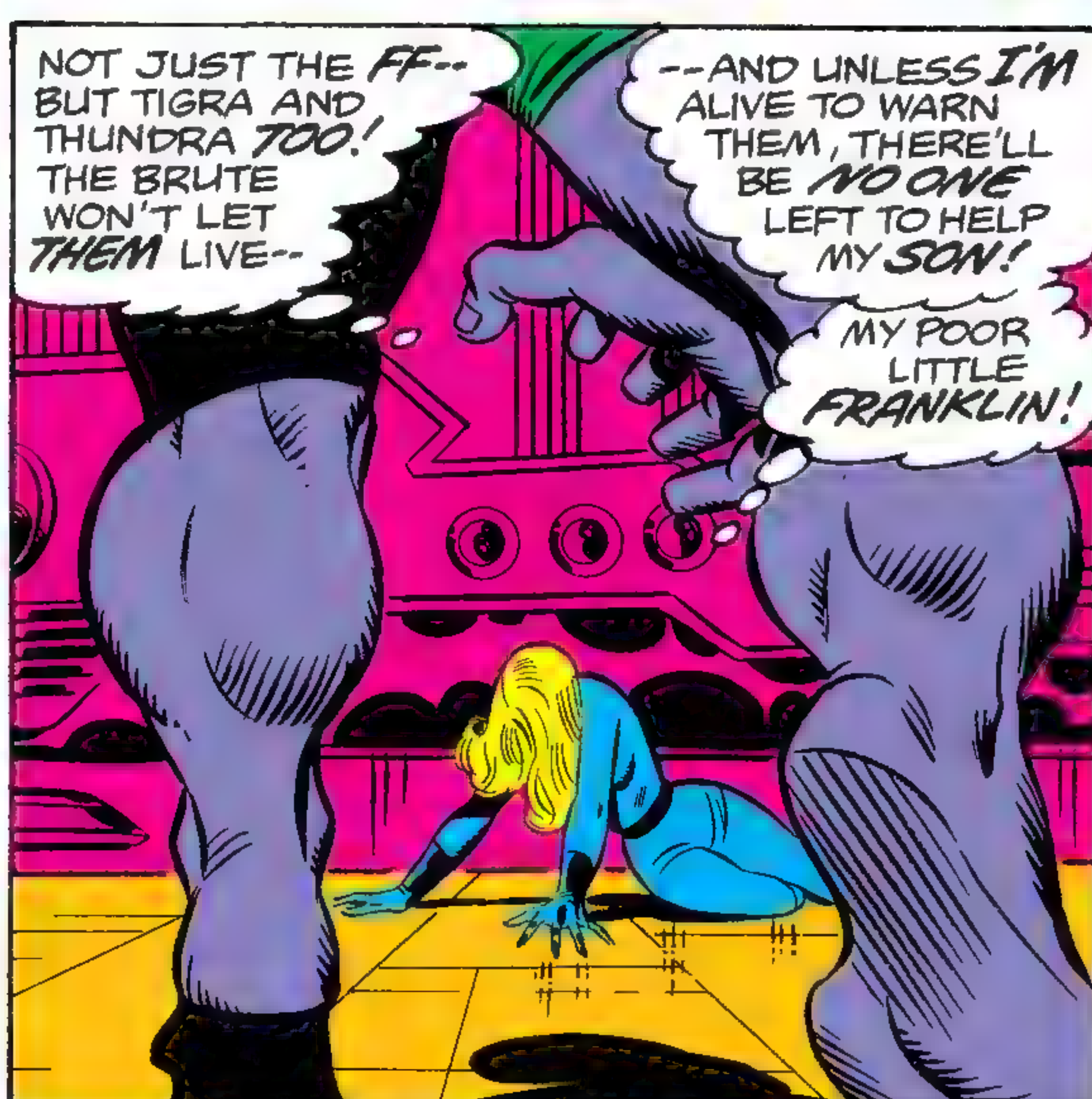
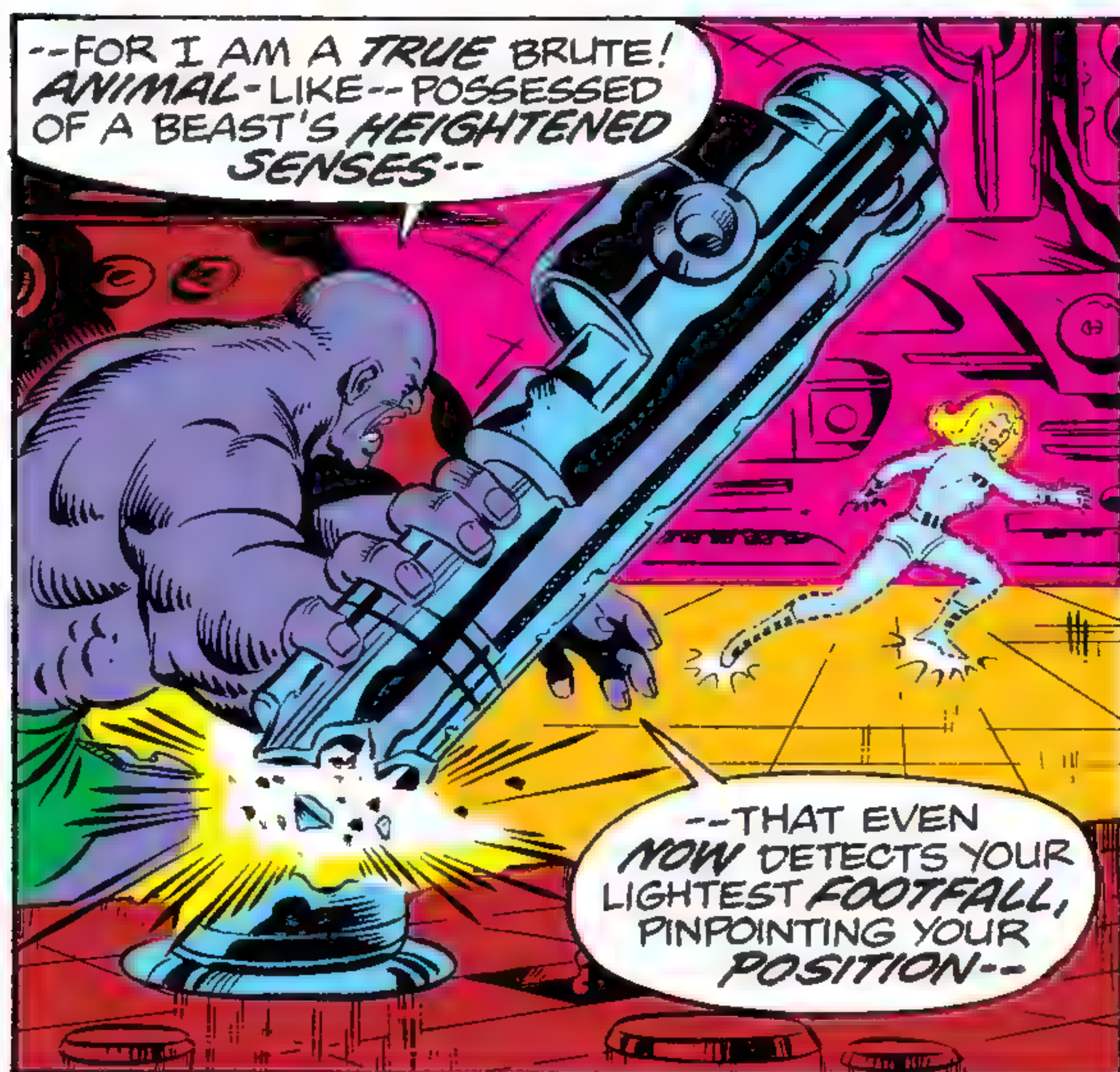
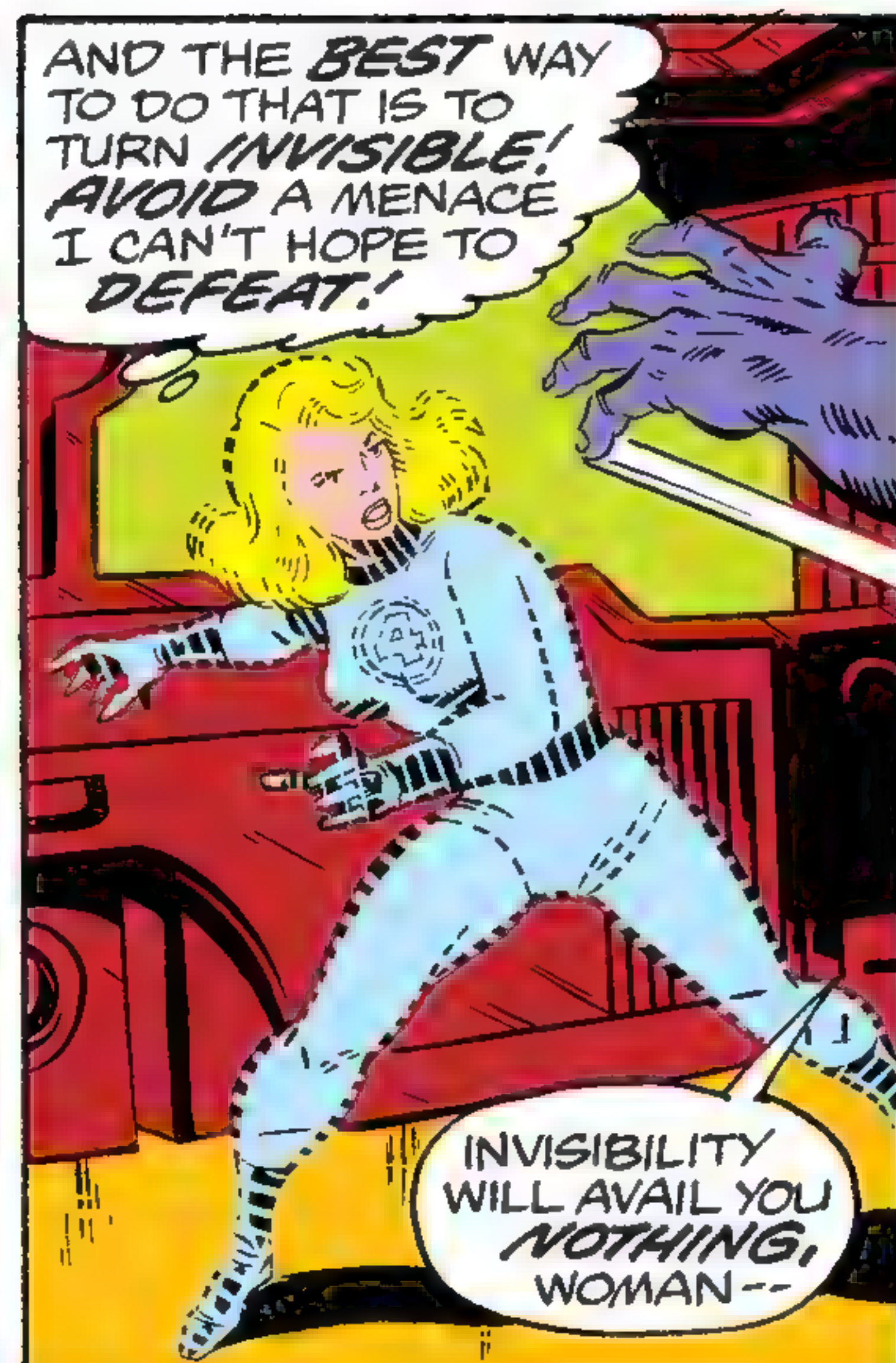
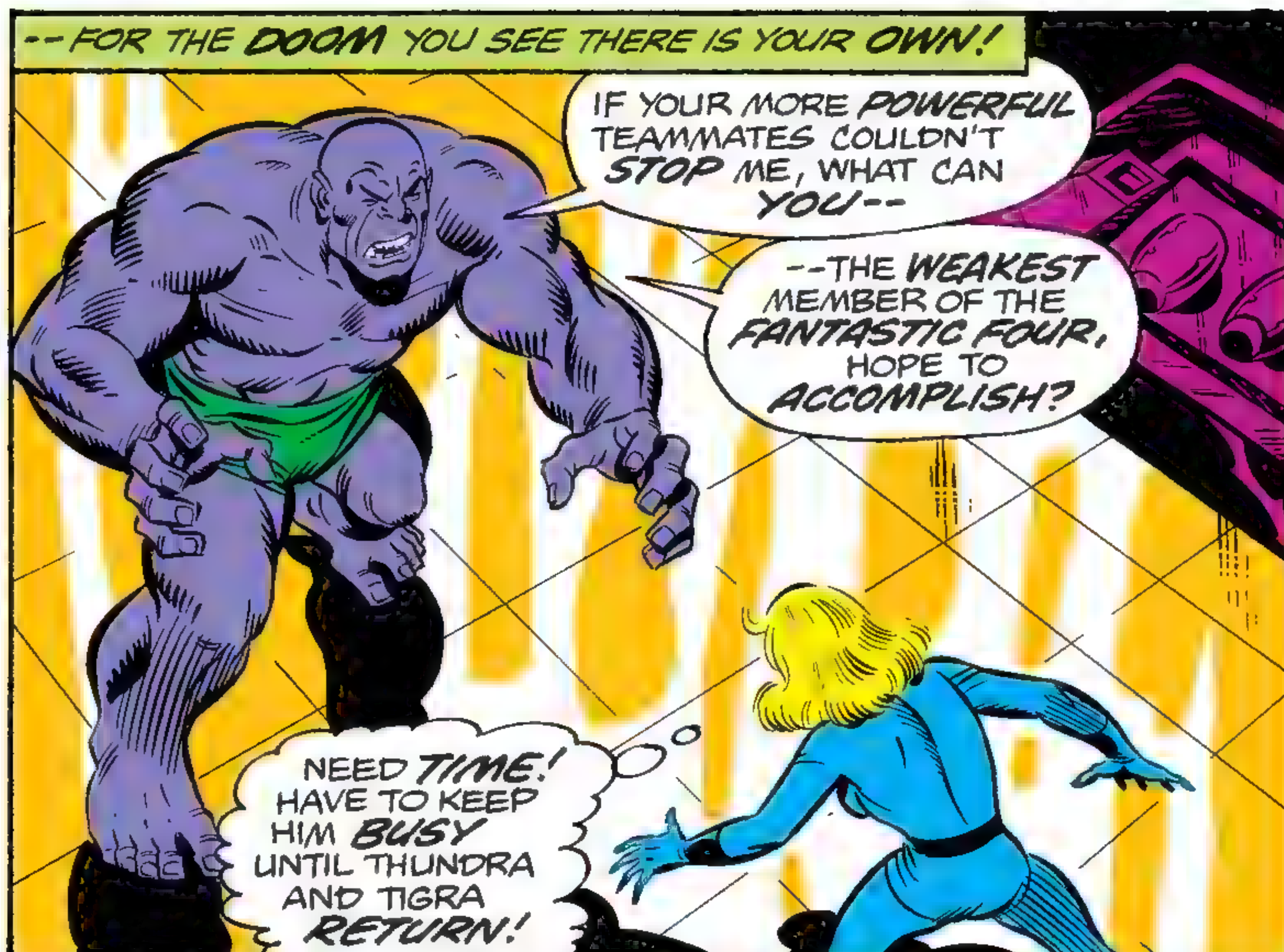
* F.F.#69
--ARCHIE.



THE
MAD
THINKER!







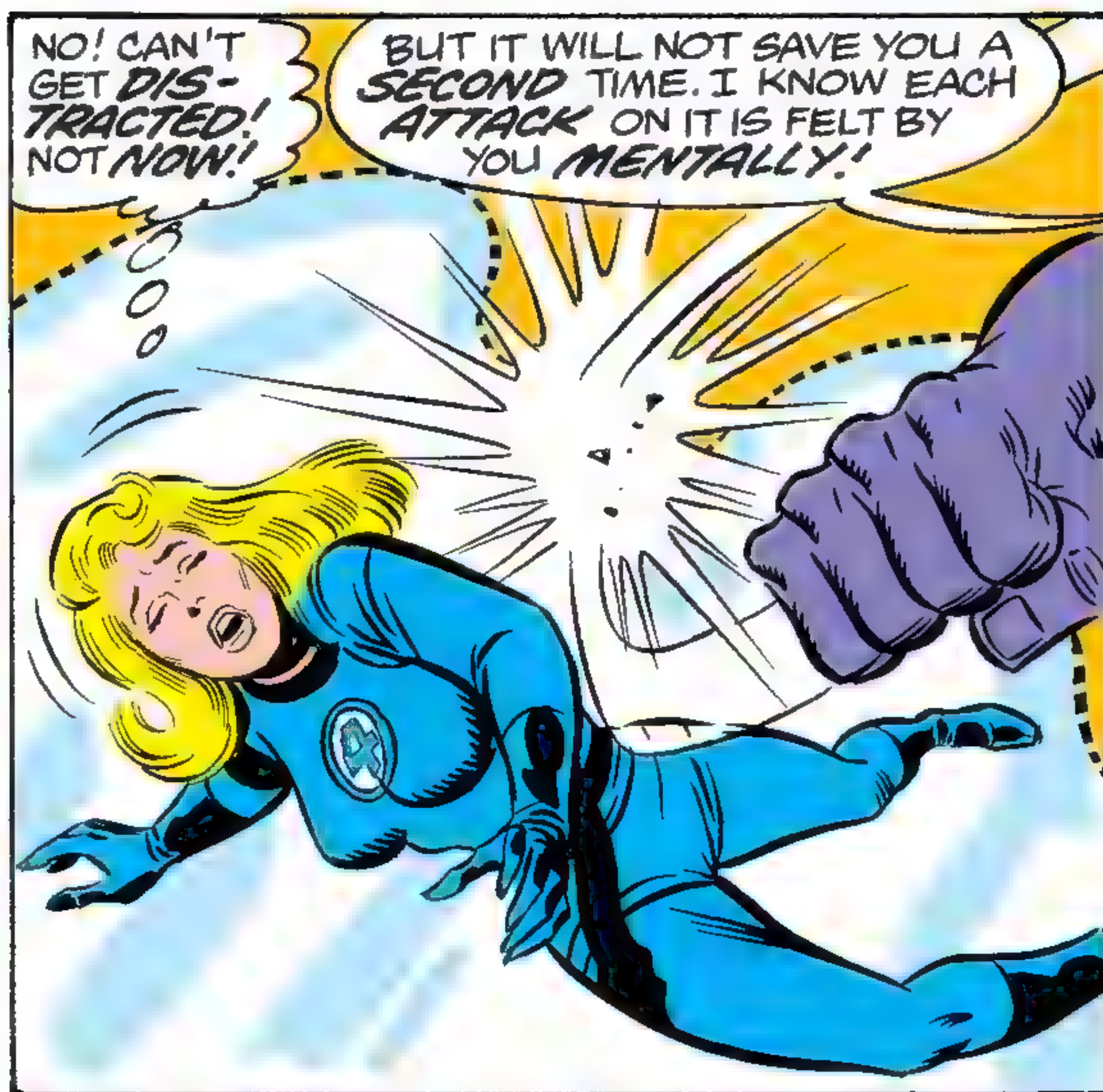


YOUR **FORCE-FIELD**--**AGAIN?!**

IT **SAVED** YOU ONCE-- ONLY BECAUSE I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO **KILL** YOU THEN!*

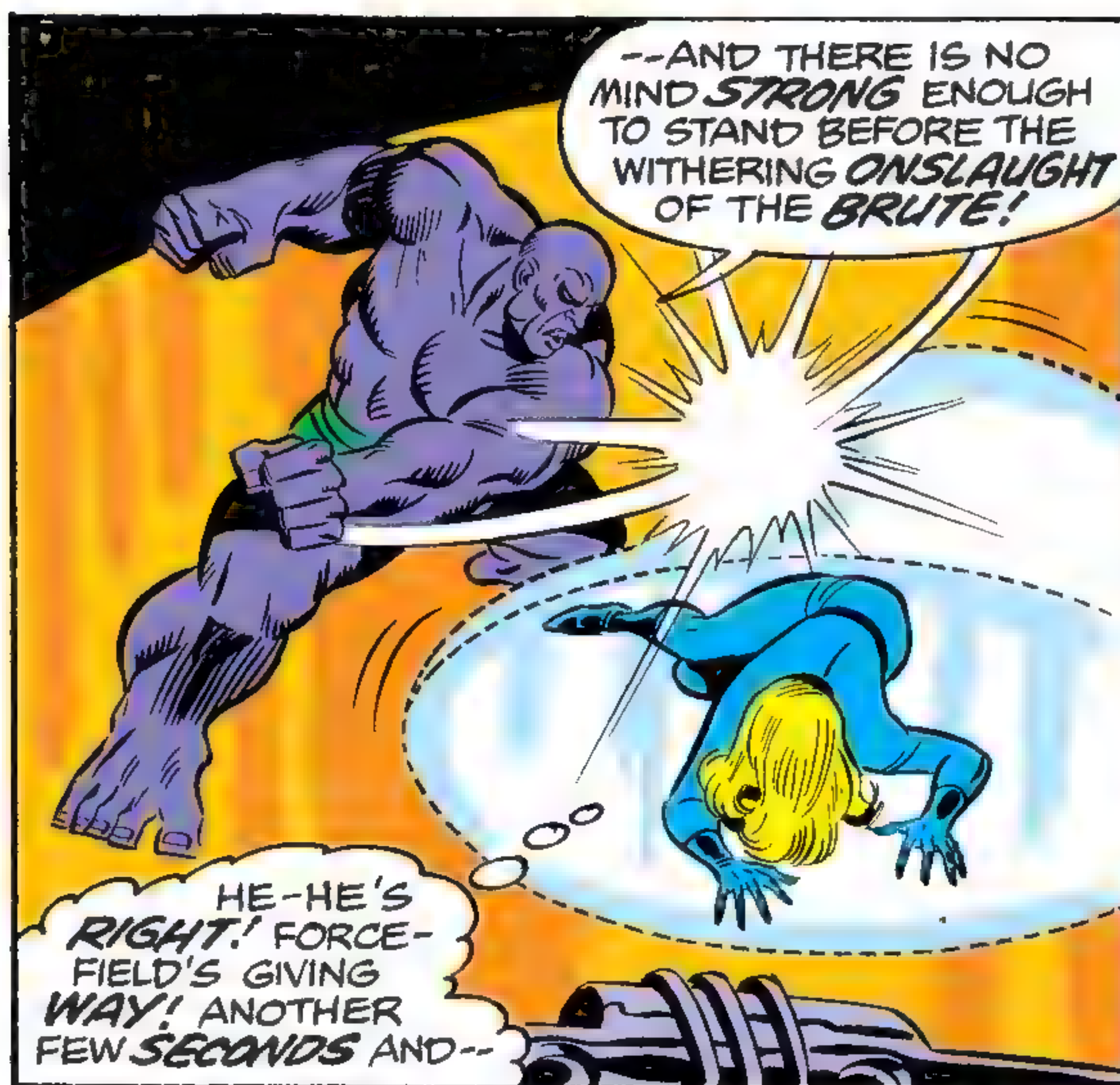
* FF #178 --ARCH.

HIS **POWER**--IT SEEMS **LIMITLESS!**



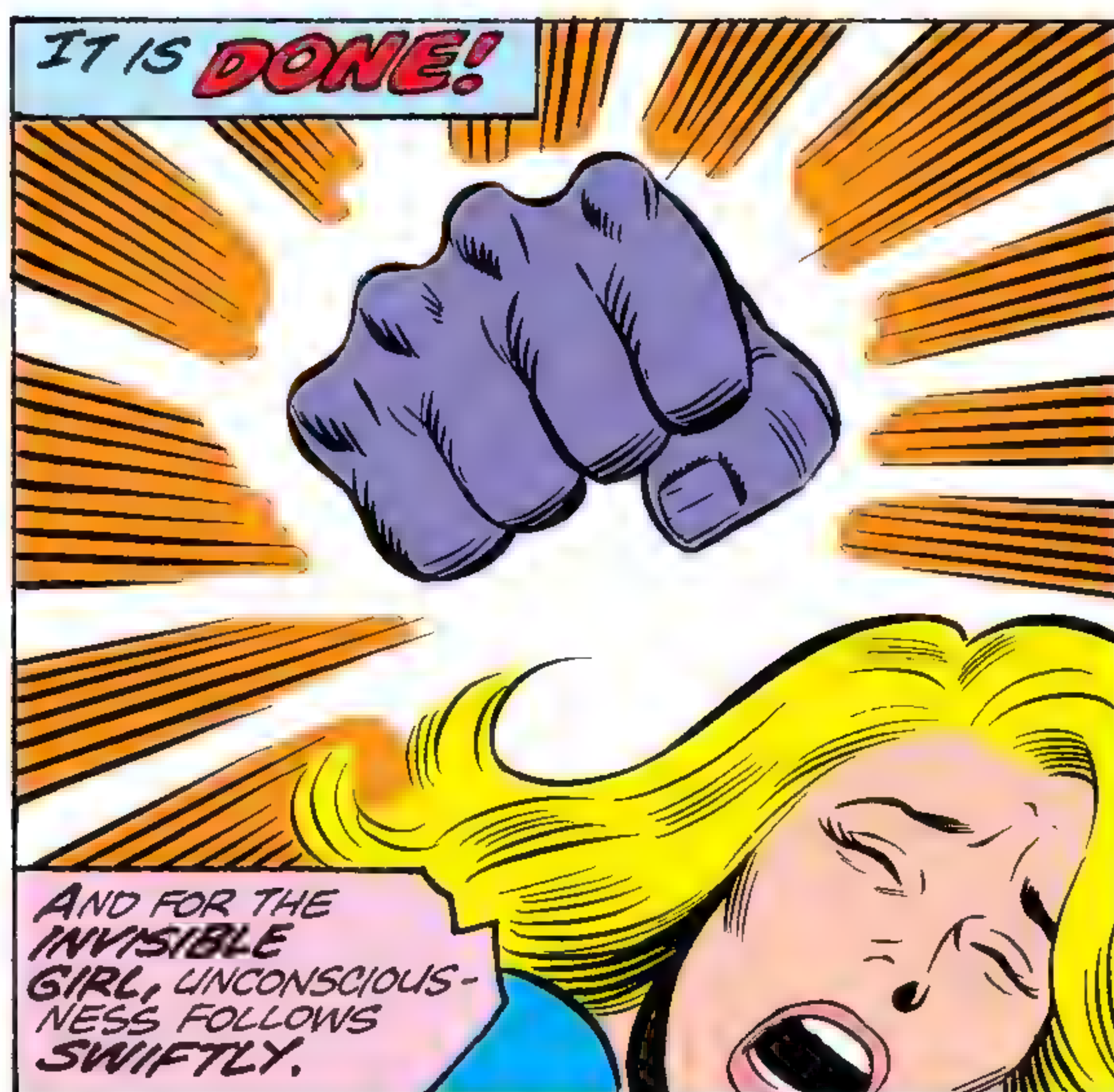
NO! CAN'T GET **DIS-TRACTED!** NOT NOW!

BUT IT WILL NOT SAVE YOU A **SECOND** TIME. I KNOW EACH **ATTACK** ON IT IS FELT BY YOU **MENTALLY!**



--AND THERE IS NO MIND **STRONG** ENOUGH TO STAND BEFORE THE **WITHERING ONSLAUGHT** OF THE **BRUTE!**

HE--HE'S **RIGHT!** **FORCE-FIELD'S** GIVING **WAY!** ANOTHER FEW **SECONDS** AND--



IT IS **DONE!**

AND FOR THE **INVISIBLE GIRL**, UNCONSCIOUSNESS FOLLOWS **SWIFTLY.**



STRANGE, THAT SHE-- THE **DISTAFF** MEMBER-- SHOULD BE THE HARDEST OF **ALL** TO DISPOSE OF!

BUT NO MATTER! THE **CONCLUSION** WAS PREORDAINED!



FOR AGAINST THE **MIGHTY BRUTE**, ALL OTHERS ARE SO **POWERLESS** AS TO BE BENEATH **CONTEMPT--**

--AND ALL **RESISTANCE** TO THE INEVITABLE IS MERELY... **LAUGHABLE!**

FAREWELL, **SUSAN RICHARDS!** WITH YOUR **DEMISE** I WILL HAVE AT LAST **ACHIEVED--**

THE DEATH AND
DESTRUCTION
OF THE
**FANTASTIC
FOUR!!**

KRAASH!



**NEXT
ISSUE:**

LO, THERE
SHALL COME AN **ENDING!**

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



30¢
©

183
JUNE
02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



TM



TM



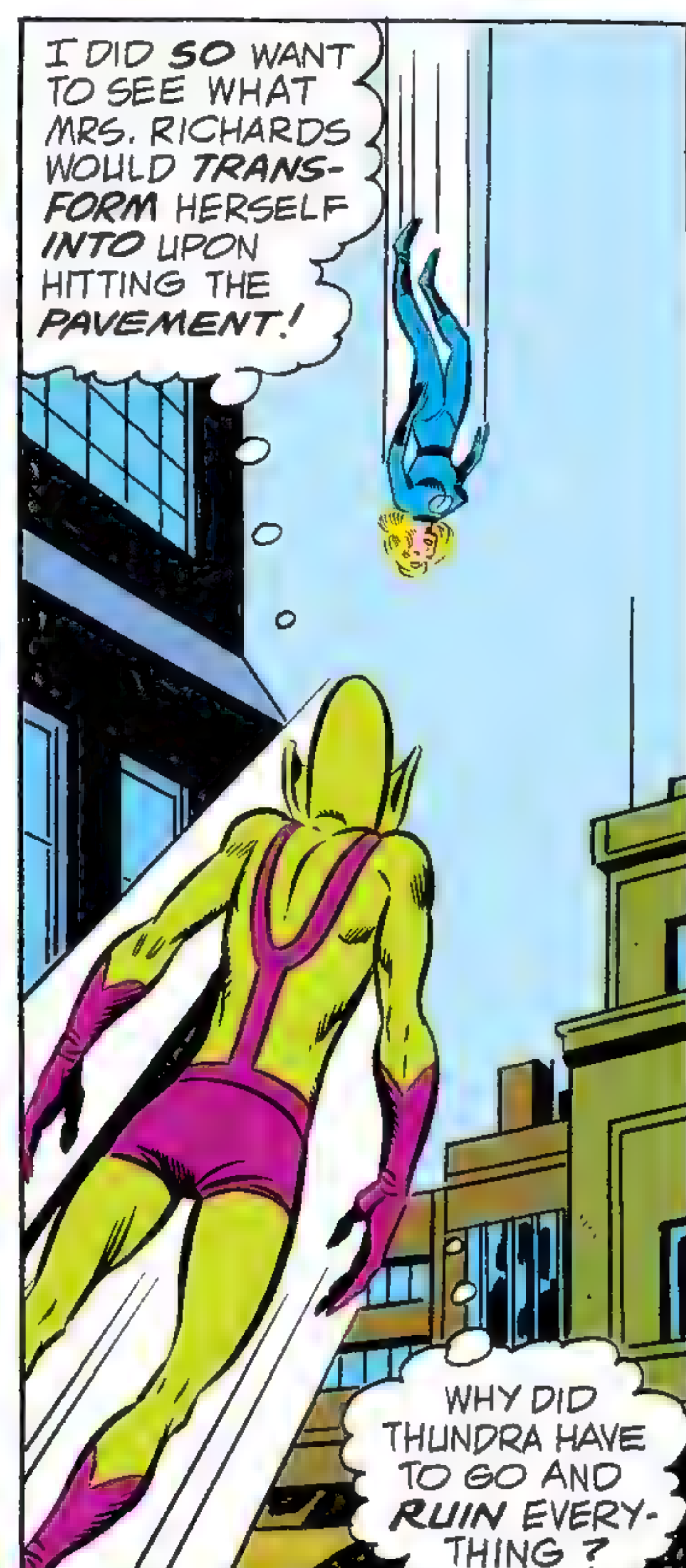
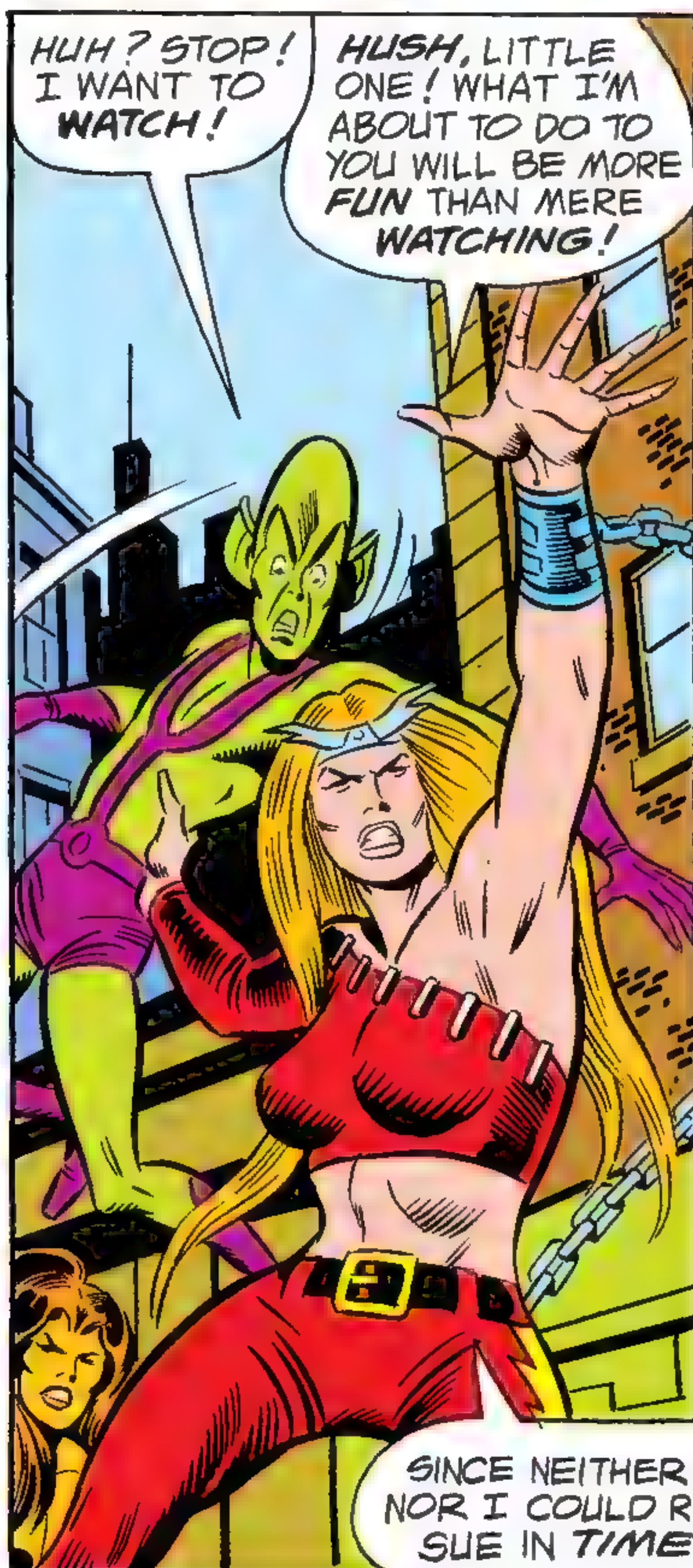
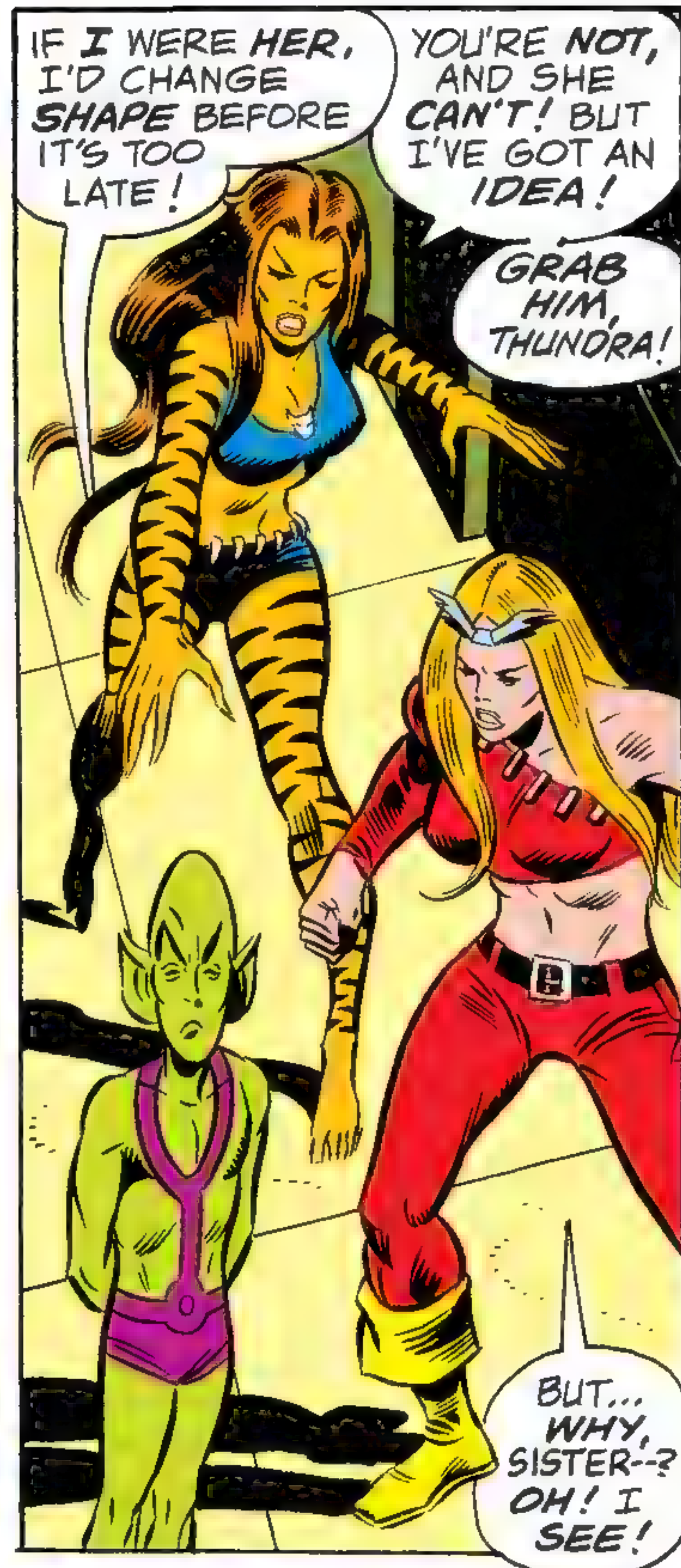
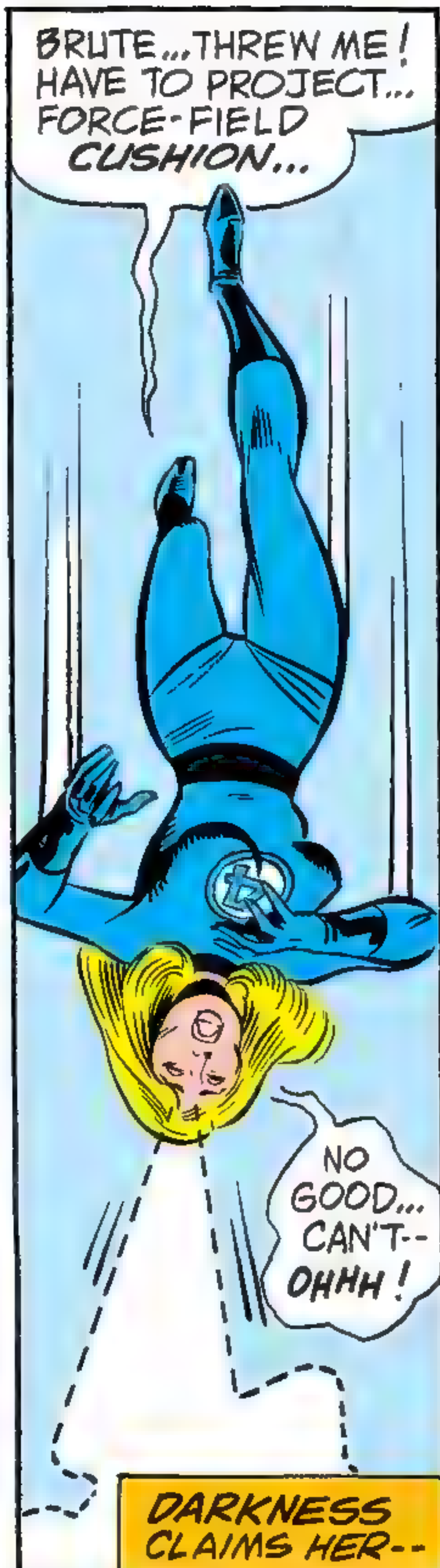
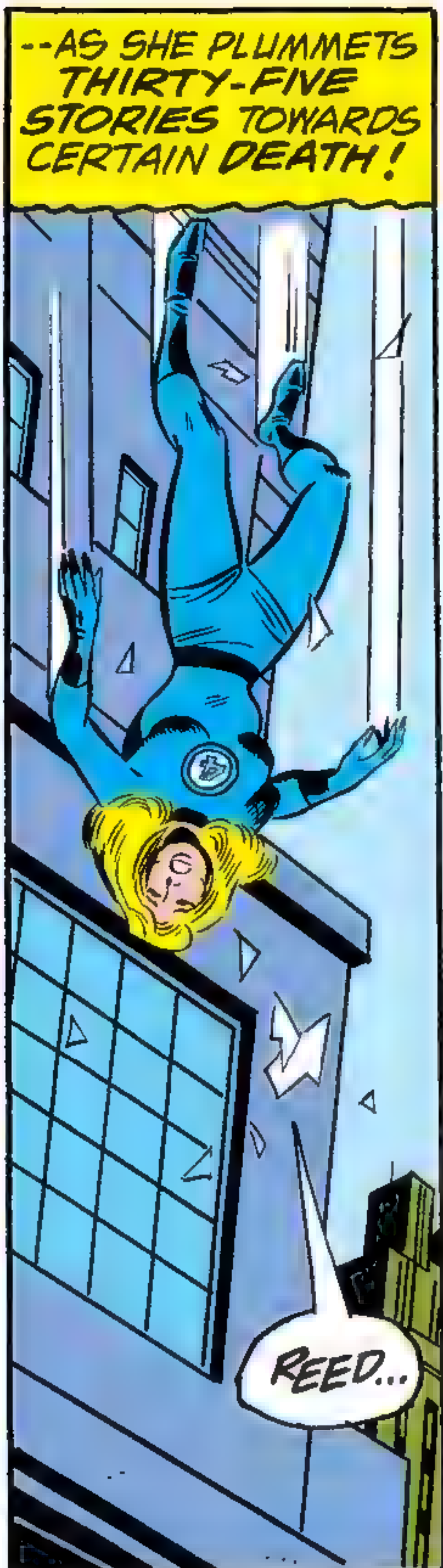
THIS ONE
HAS IT
ALL!!!

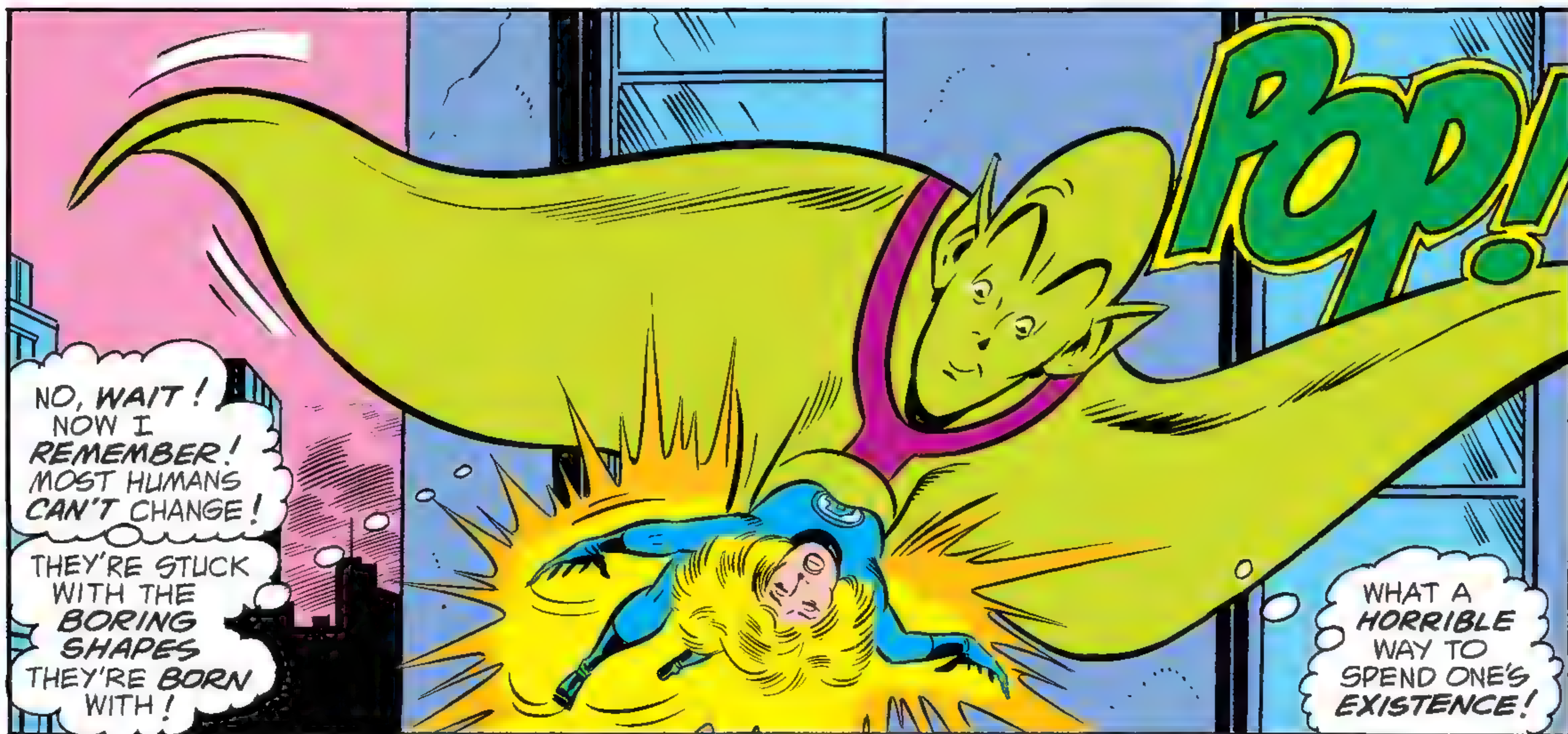
A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

BILL MANTLO ★ SAL BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT ★ GASPAR LETTERS ★ ARCHIE GOODWIN
SCRIPT ILLUSTRATORS PHIL RACHE COLORS EDITOR



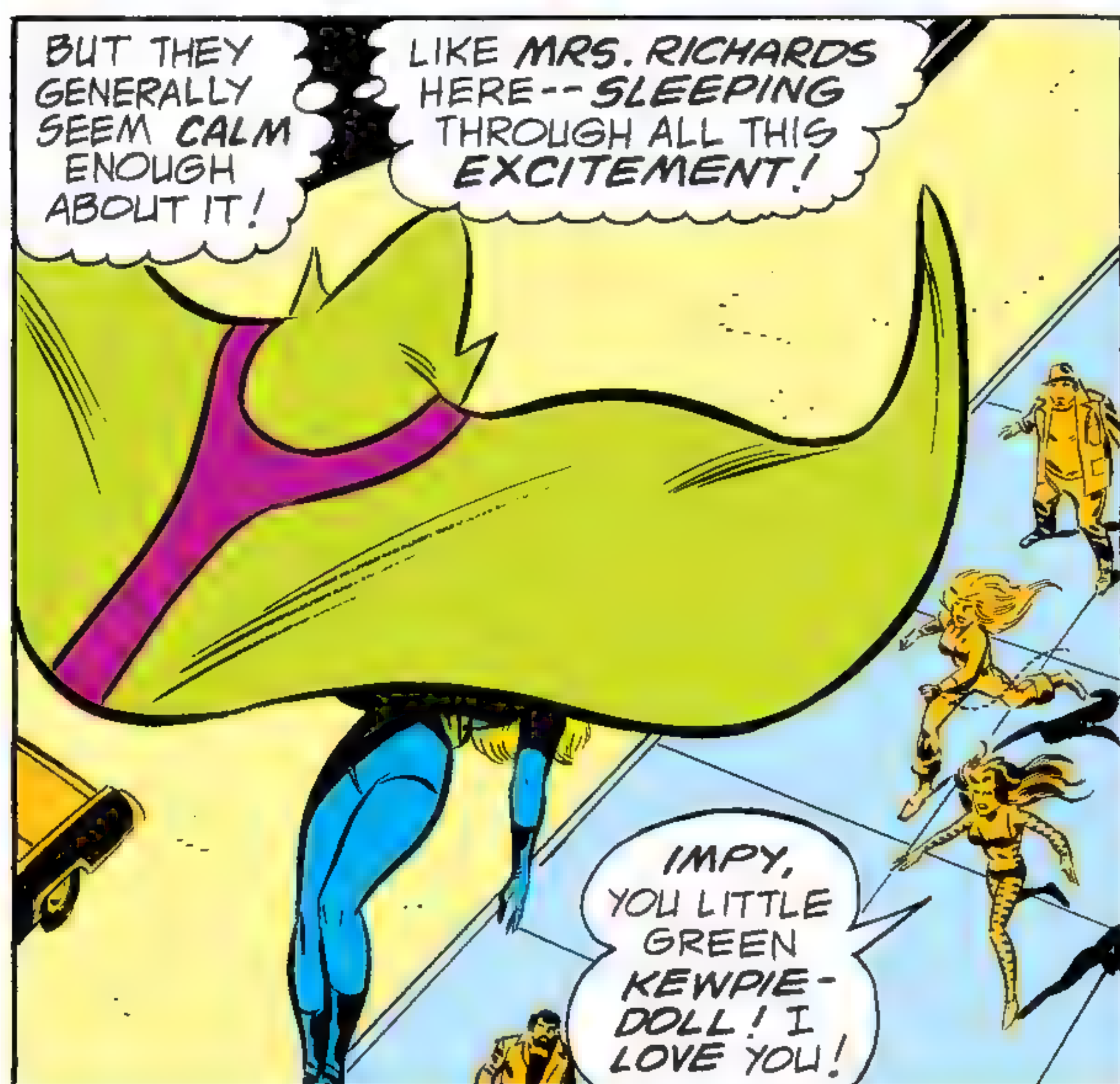




NO, WAIT!
NOW I
REMEMBER!
MOST HUMANS
CAN'T CHANGE!

THEY'RE STUCK
WITH THE
BORING
SHAPES
THEY'RE BORN
WITH!

WHAT A
HORRIBLE
WAY TO
SPEND ONE'S
EXISTENCE!



BUT THEY
GENERALLY
SEEM CALM
ENOUGH
ABOUT IT!

LIKE MRS. RICHARDS
HERE-- SLEEPING
THROUGH ALL THIS
EXCITEMENT!

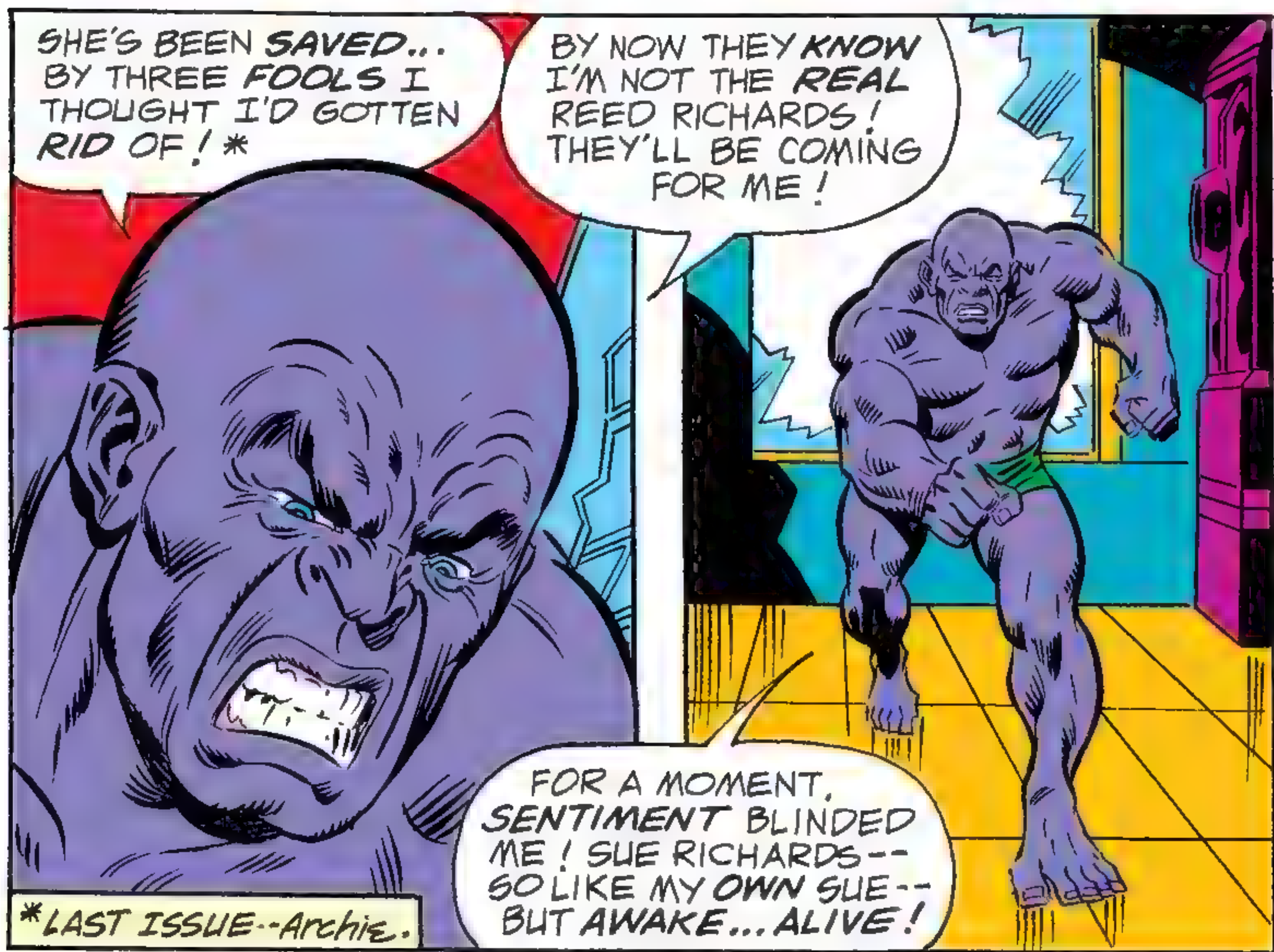
IMPY,
YOU LITTLE
GREEN
KEWPIE-
DOLL! I
LOVE YOU!



BUT WHAT OF THE INVISIBLE GIRL'S
WOULD-BE MURDERER... THE BRUTE?

SUE! I-I DIDN'T
MEAN TO KILL
HER!

BUT SHE--
WAIT!



SHE'S BEEN SAVED...
BY THREE FOOLS I
THOUGHT I'D GOTTEN
RID OF! *

BY NOW THEY KNOW
I'M NOT THE REAL
REED RICHARDS!
THEY'LL BE COMING
FOR ME!

FOR A MOMENT,
SENTIMENT BLINDED
ME! SUE RICHARDS--
SO LIKE MY OWN SUE--
BUT AWAKE... ALIVE!

*LAST ISSUE--Archie.



BUT, WHATEVER THE COST, I
MUST SURVIVE! THE CON-
TROLS ARE SET! SHOULD SHE
DARE ENTER THE BAXTER
BUILDING AGAIN--

--RICHARDS' WIFE WILL FIND
THE F.F.'S OWN DEFENSES
TURNED AGAINST HER!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE...

SHEESH! NO
MATTER HOW
FAR YA LOOK,
THERE STILL
AIN'T NUTHIN'
TA SEE!

WHAT WERE
YOU EXPECT-
ING, BEN?
A RESCUE
SHIP?

CHEER UP, YOU
TWO! WE'RE NOT
BEATEN YET!

IF YOU TRULY
BELIEVE THAT,
RICHARDS, YOU
ARE EITHER
DELUDED OR
A FOOL! WE
LIVE--

--BUT WE ARE
POWERLESS
BEFORE THE
MAD THINKER'S
SUPER-
ANDROID!*

* FF #181-182 -- Arch.

YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD
US HOW THE ANDROID
WRESTED POWER FROM
YOU IN YOUR OWN KING-
DOM, ANNIHILUS!

BY STEALING
THAT WHICH IS
MOST PRECIOUS
TO ME--

--THE POWER
OF MY COSMIC
CONTROL ROD!
HEED MY TALE!

"SOME MONTHS PAST,
AS YOU KNOW TIME,
THERE WAS DIS-
COVERED IN MY REALM..."

AN ANDROID!
FEATURELESS--
UNMOVING!!

I KNOW NOT
WHENCE IT
CAME, BUT IT
BELONGS NOW
TO ANNIHILUS--
TO DO WITH AS
HE PLEASES!

GOOD LORD! HE MUST
MEAN THE THINKER'S
KILLER ANDROID--
WHOSE PRIME DIRECTIVE
WAS TO DESTROY THE
F.F.!*

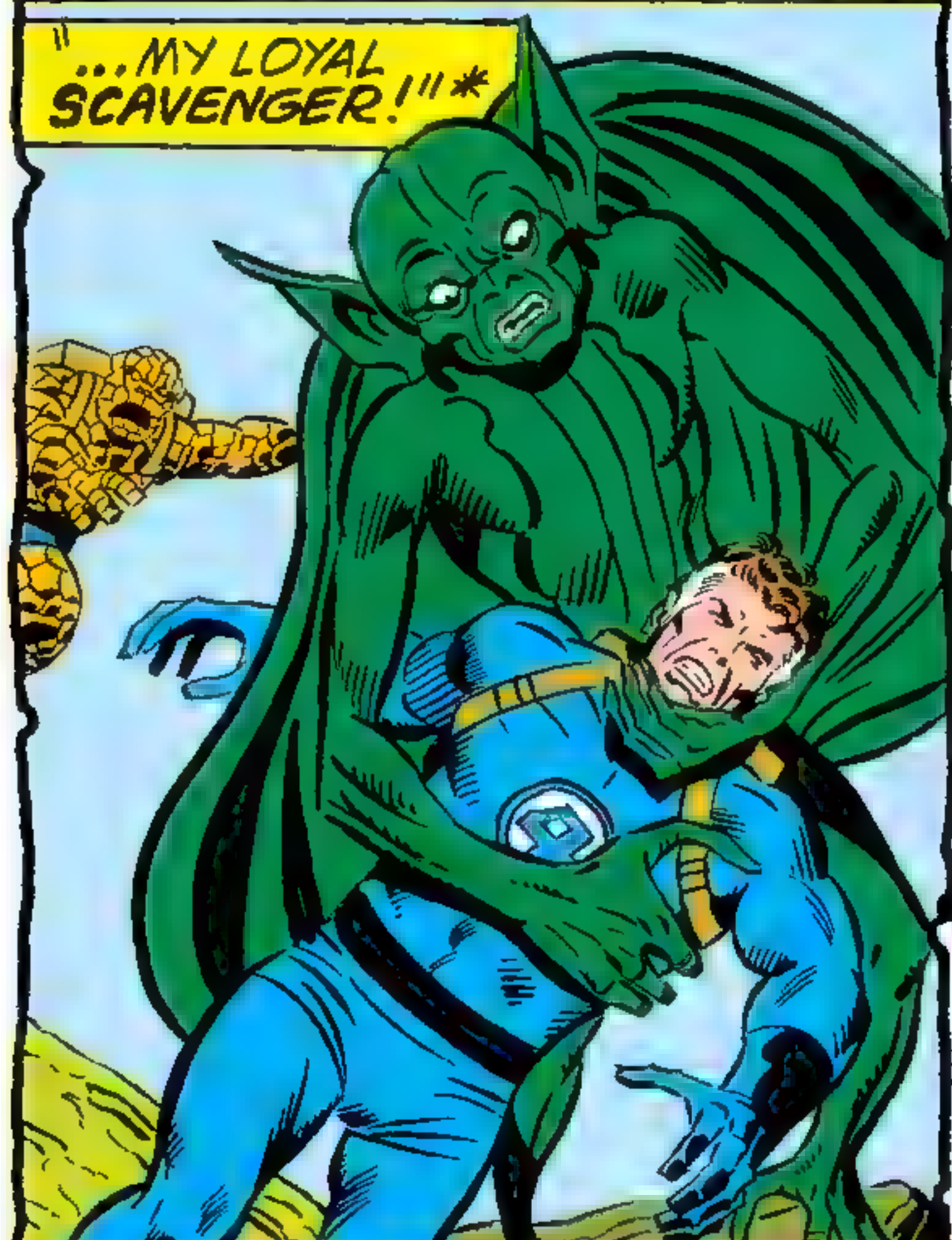
WE HURLED IT INTO THE NEGATIVE
ZONE, WHERE, UNABLE TO SENSE
ITS TARGETS, IT MUST'VE
AUTOMATICALLY SHUT
ITSELF DOWN!

"NO LIVING
BEING COULD
BE TRUSTED
NOT TO STEAL
MY ONE
TREASURE!"

* FF #71--
Arch.

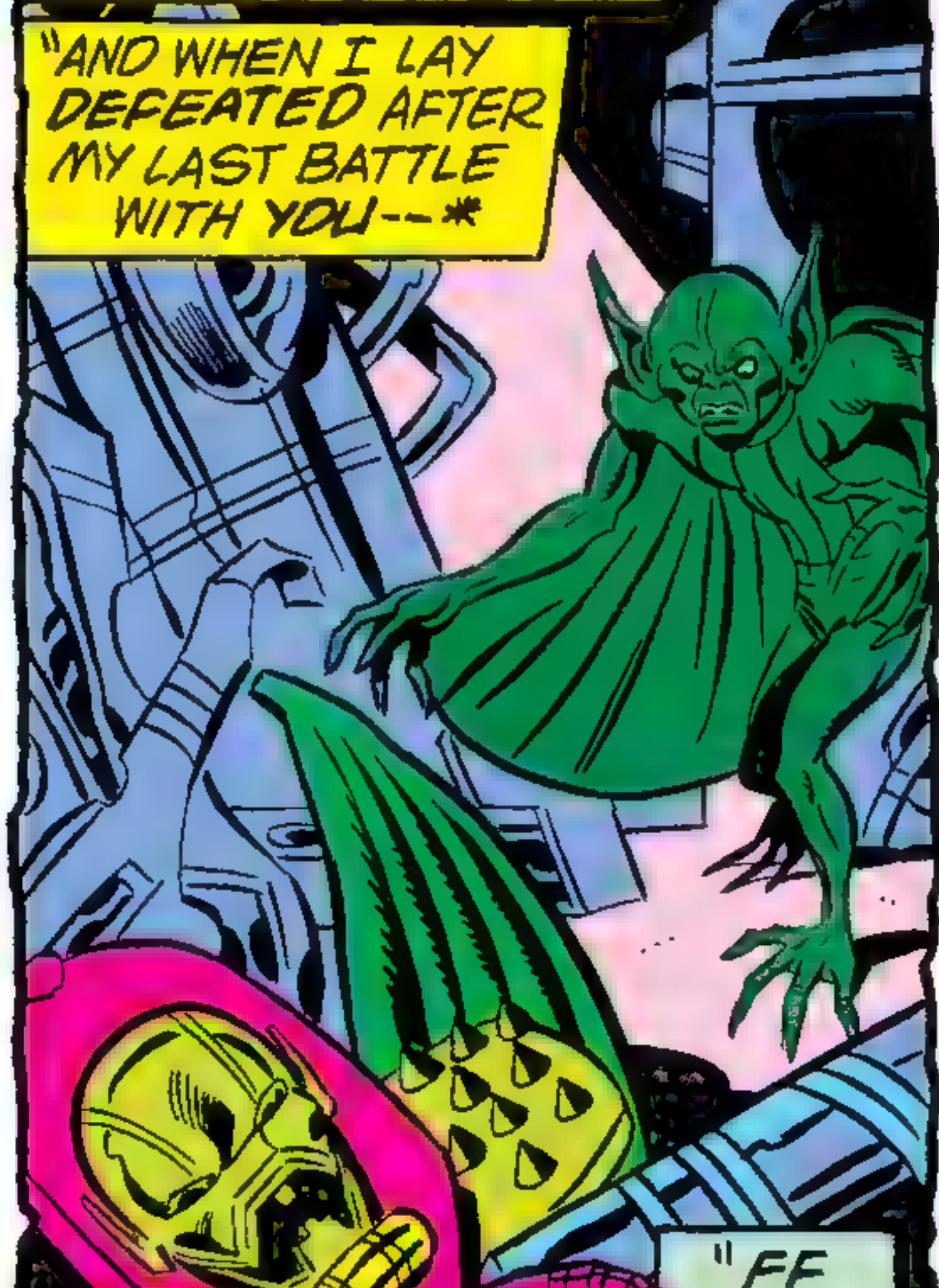
"SO I DECIDED TO MOLD THIS UNLIVING MACHINE INTO A
CREATURE WHO WOULD NEVER BETRAY ME!"

"AND THUS--TOTALLY SUB-SERVIENT, UNRESERVEDLY TRUSTWORTHY-- WAS BORN...



...MY LOYAL SCAVENGER!!" *
* NO, WE DIDN'T PULL HIM OUT OF LEFT-FIELD! CHECK OUT FF ANNUAL #6--Assiduous Arch.

"BUT, UNKNOWN TO ME, A DESIRE GREW IN MY CREATION TO TRULY... LIVE!



"AND WHEN I LAY DEFEATED AFTER MY LAST BATTLE WITH YOU--*
" FF #141-- Arch again.

"--THE SCAVENGER TOOK MY COSMIC CONTROL ROD FROM ITS PLACE AT MY THROAT!



"HIS GREAT DESIRE FORMED IN HIS DIM MIND--

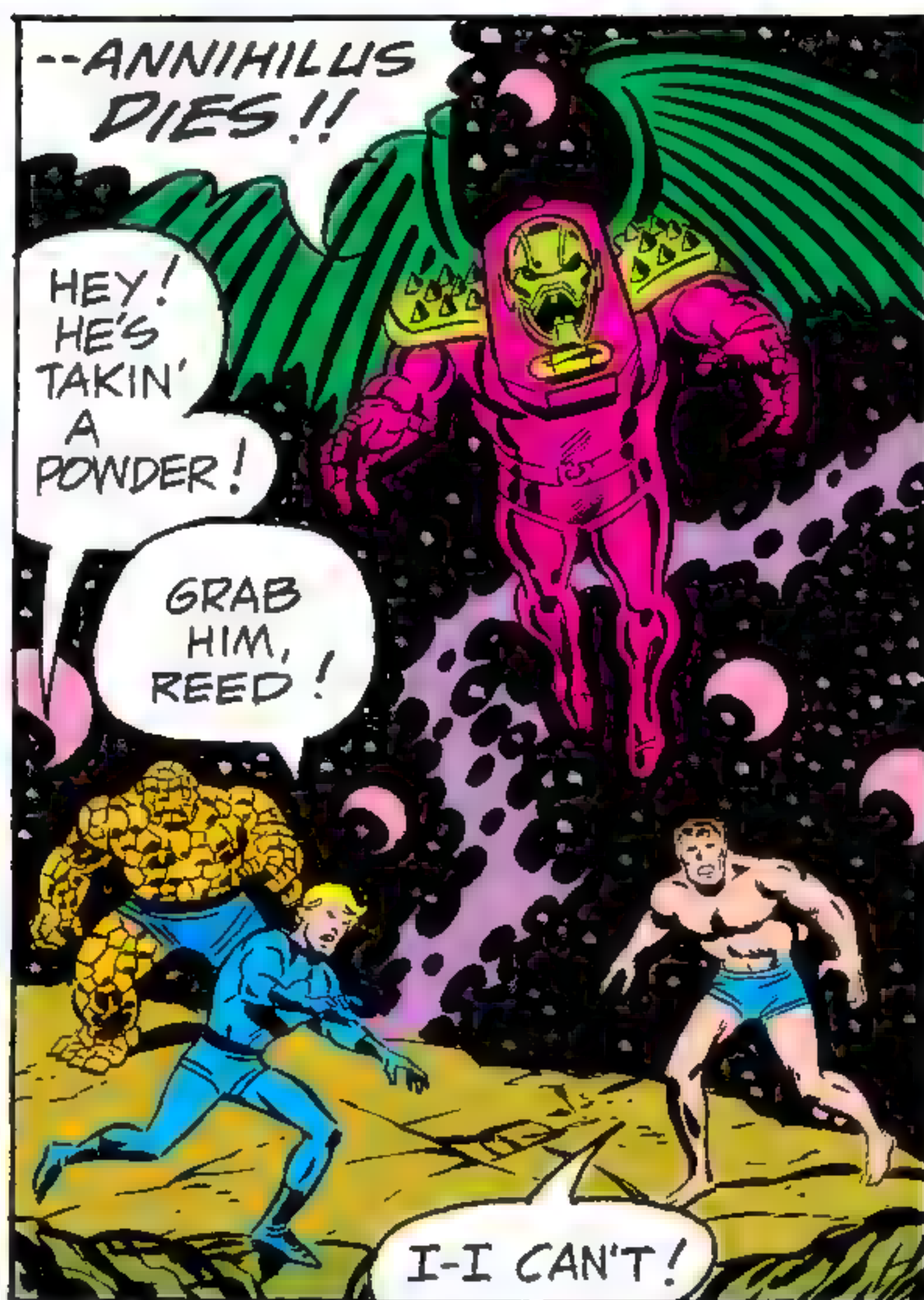
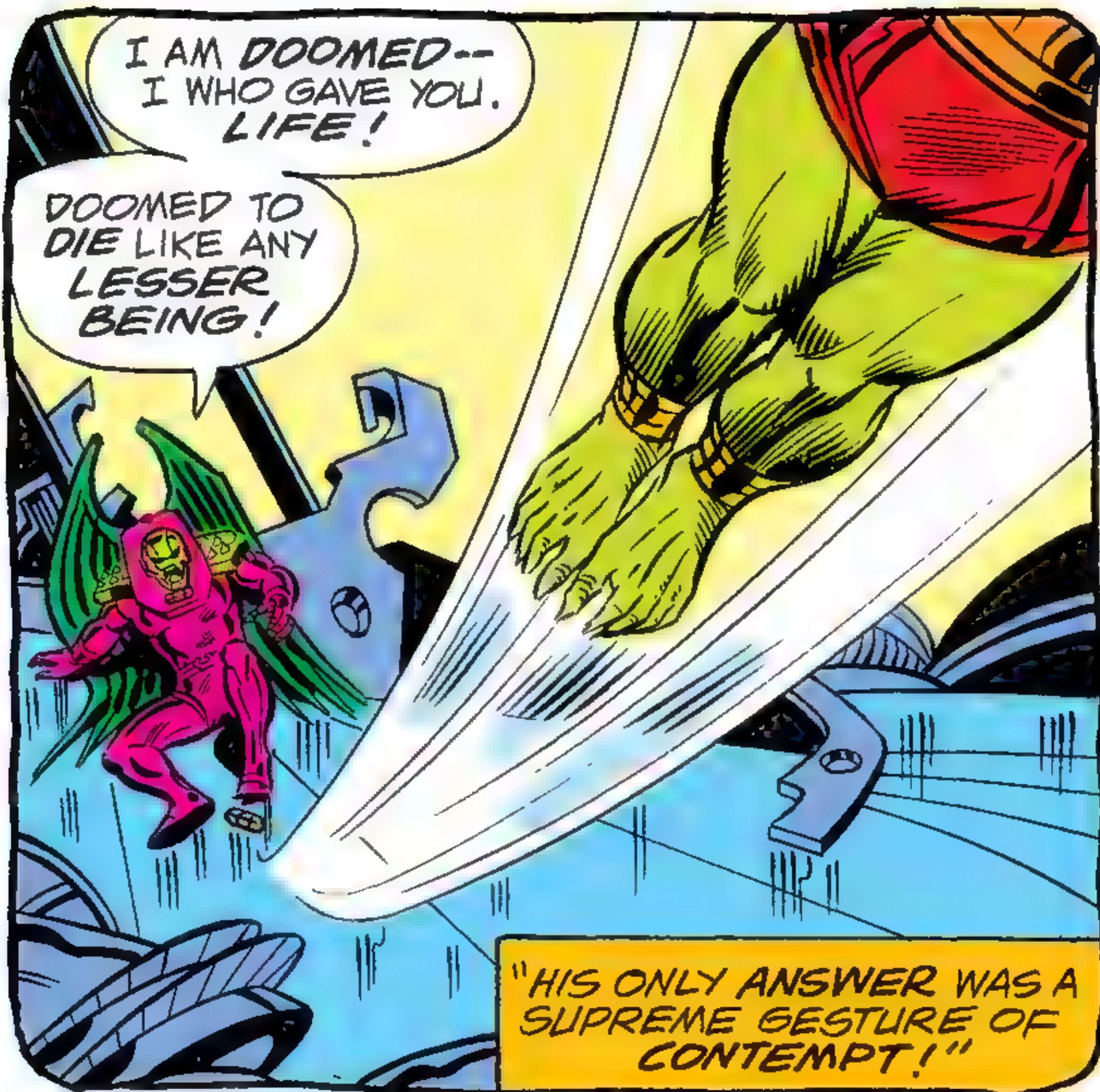
"--AND, AS IF IN RESPONSE TO HIS NEED THE ROD PULSED! IT GLOWED! ITS POWER STREAMED FORTH-- BATHING MY ONCE-SIMPLE CREATURE--

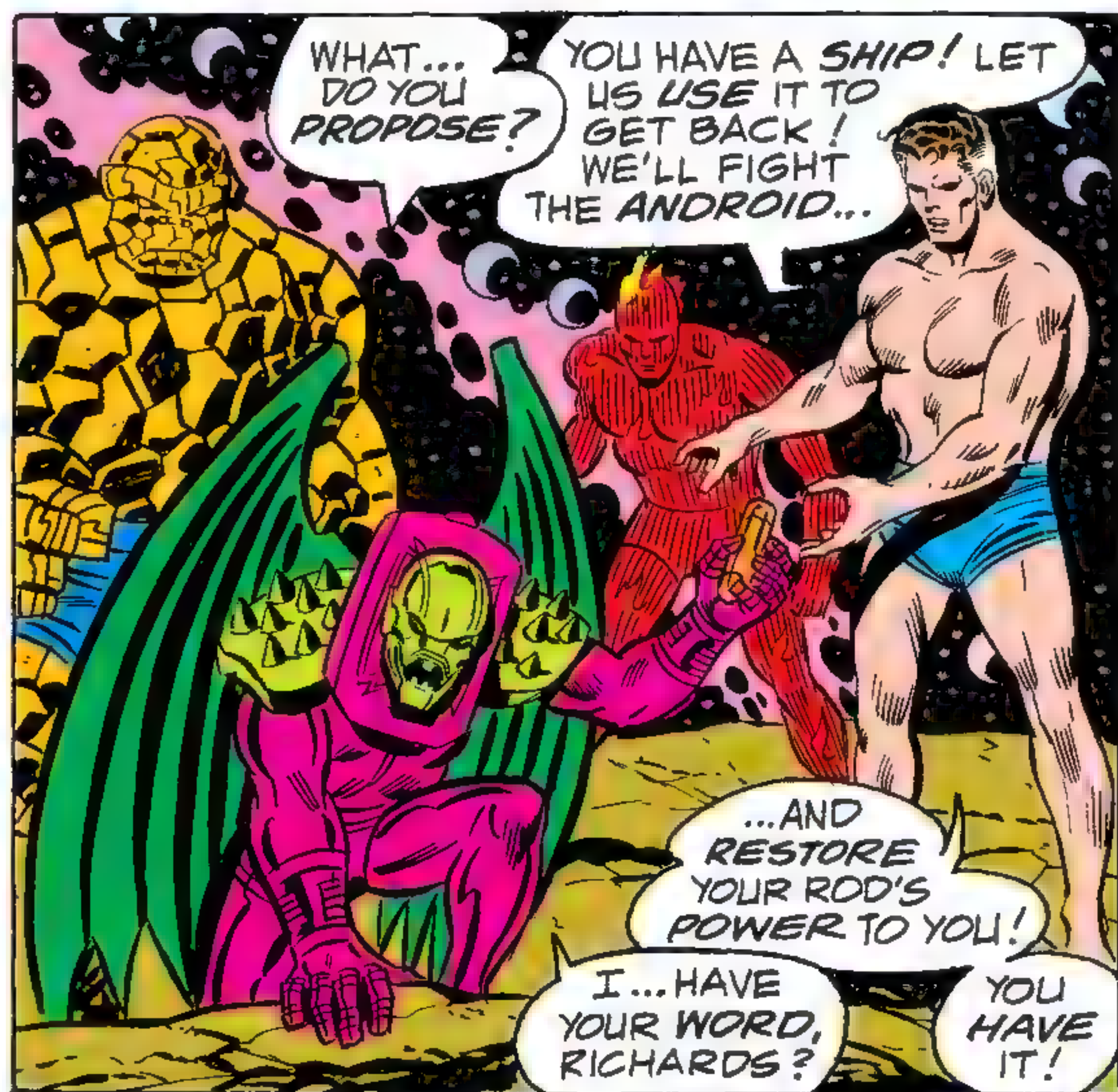
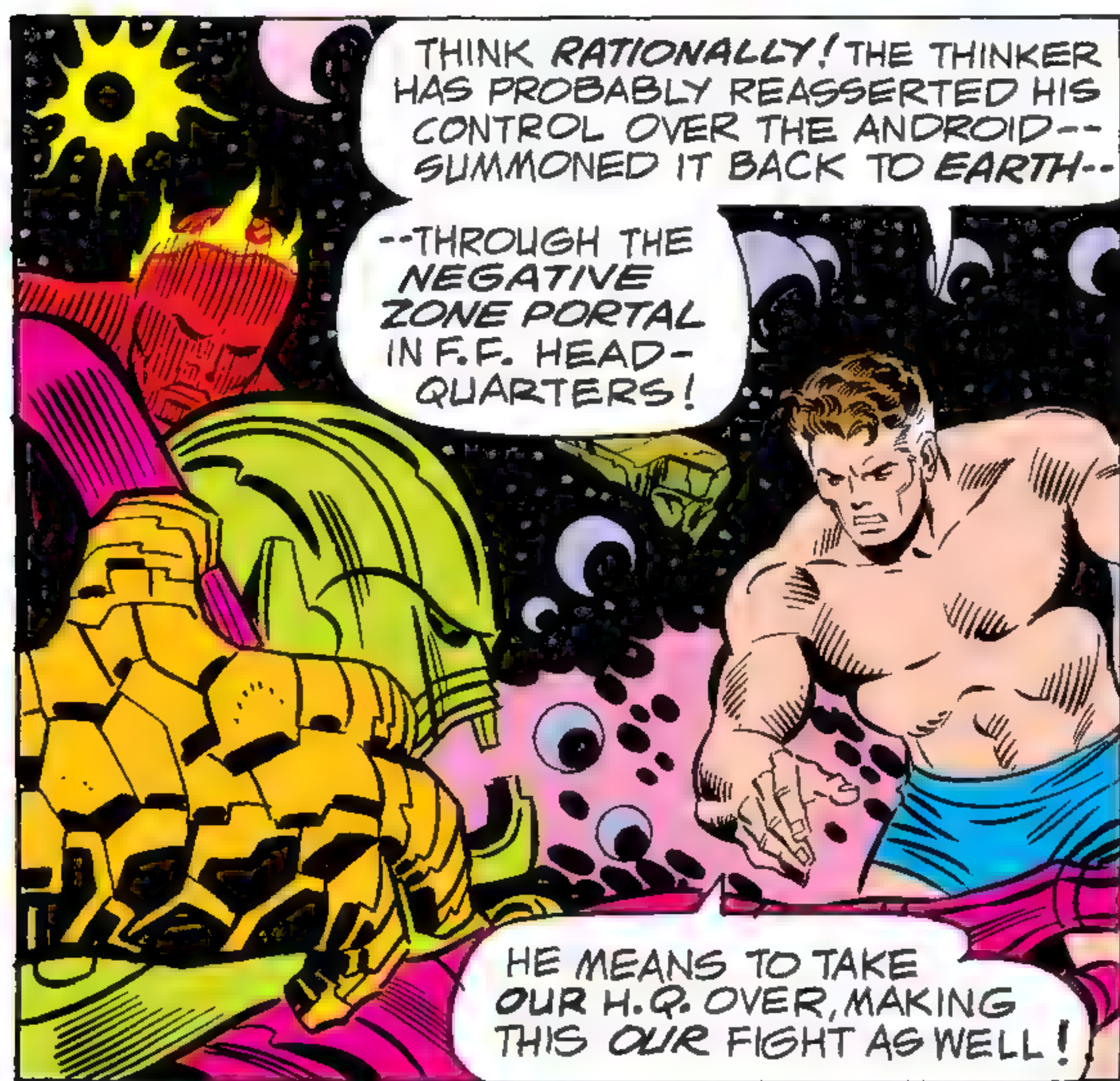
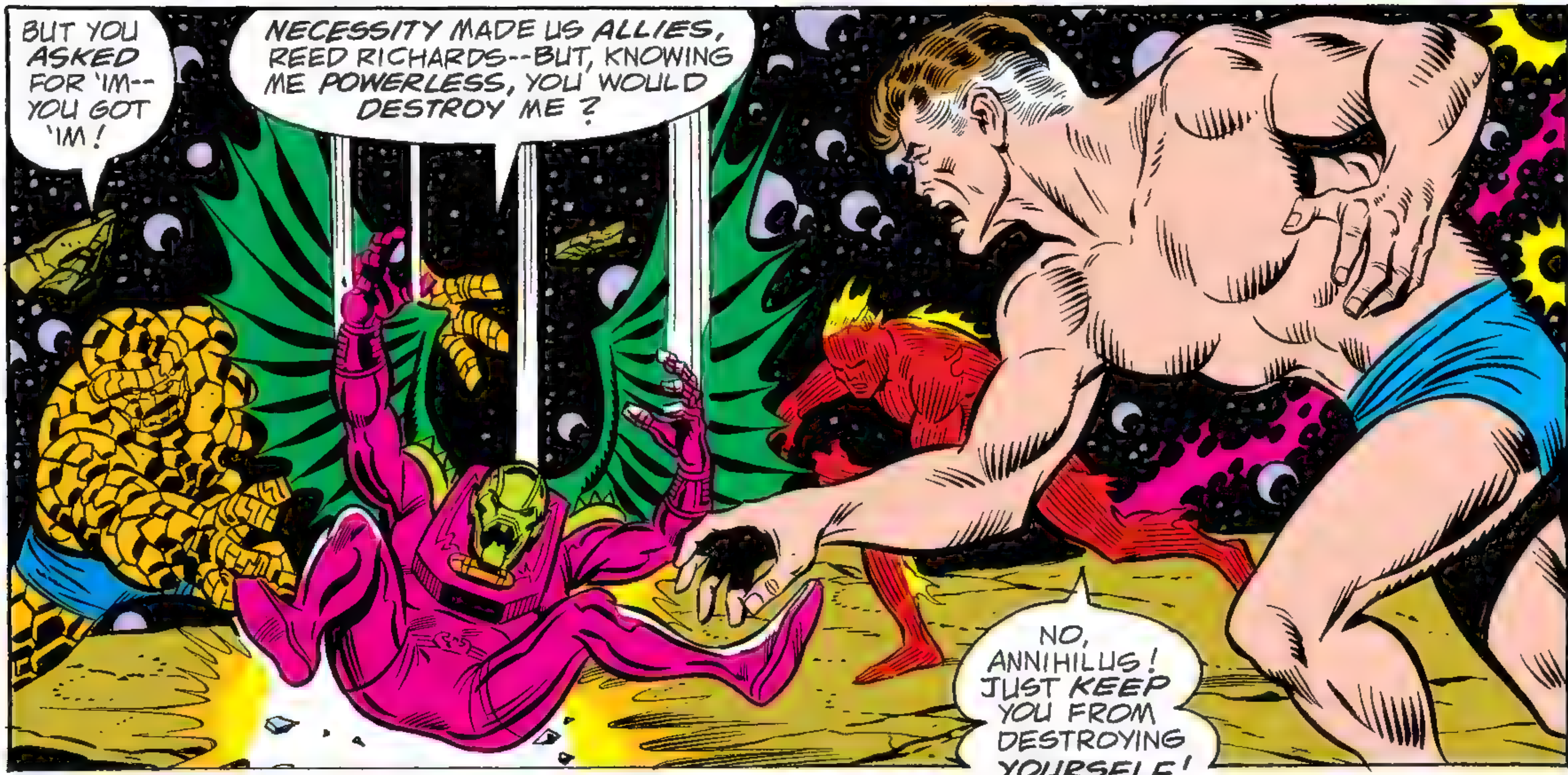


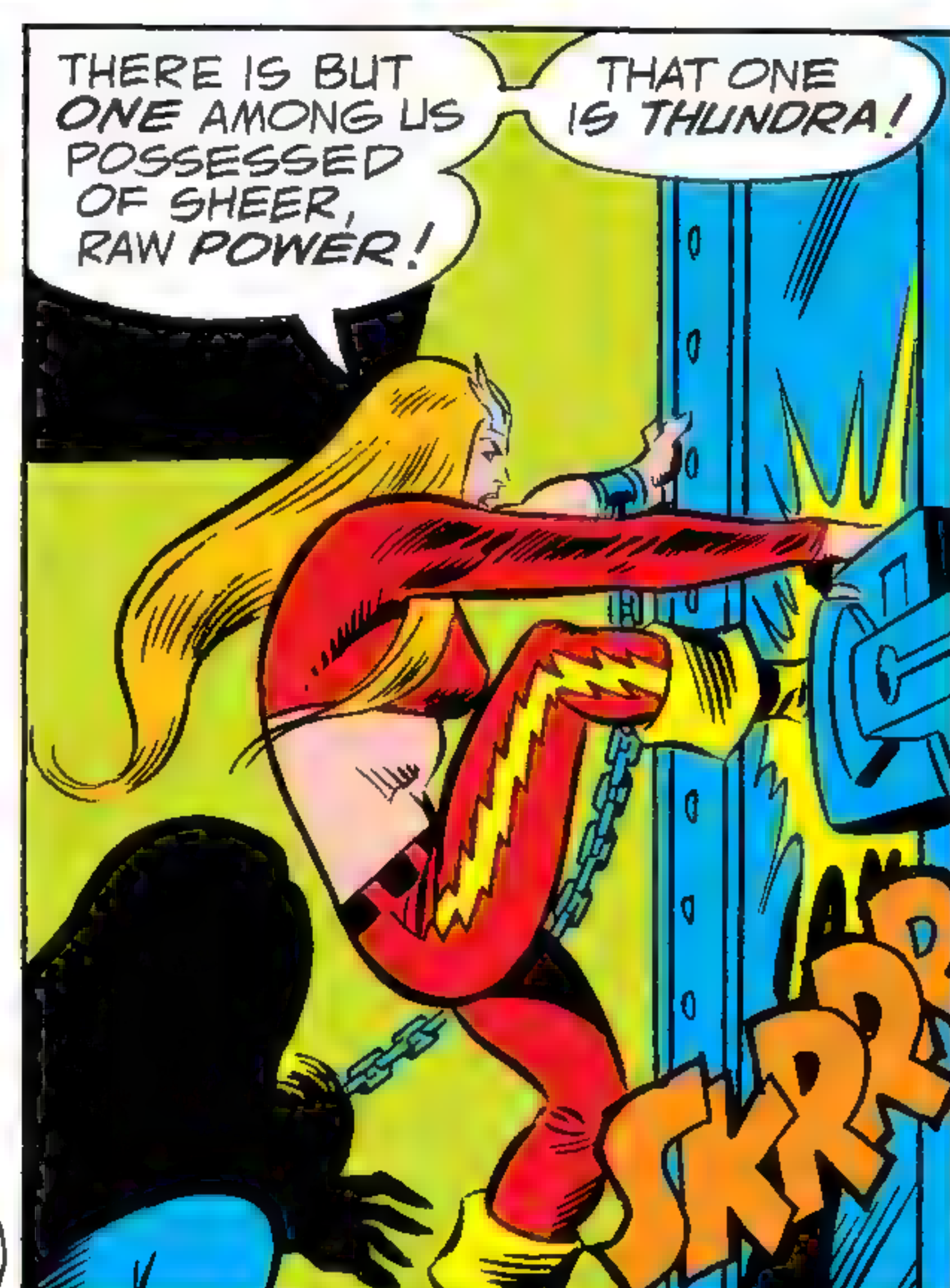
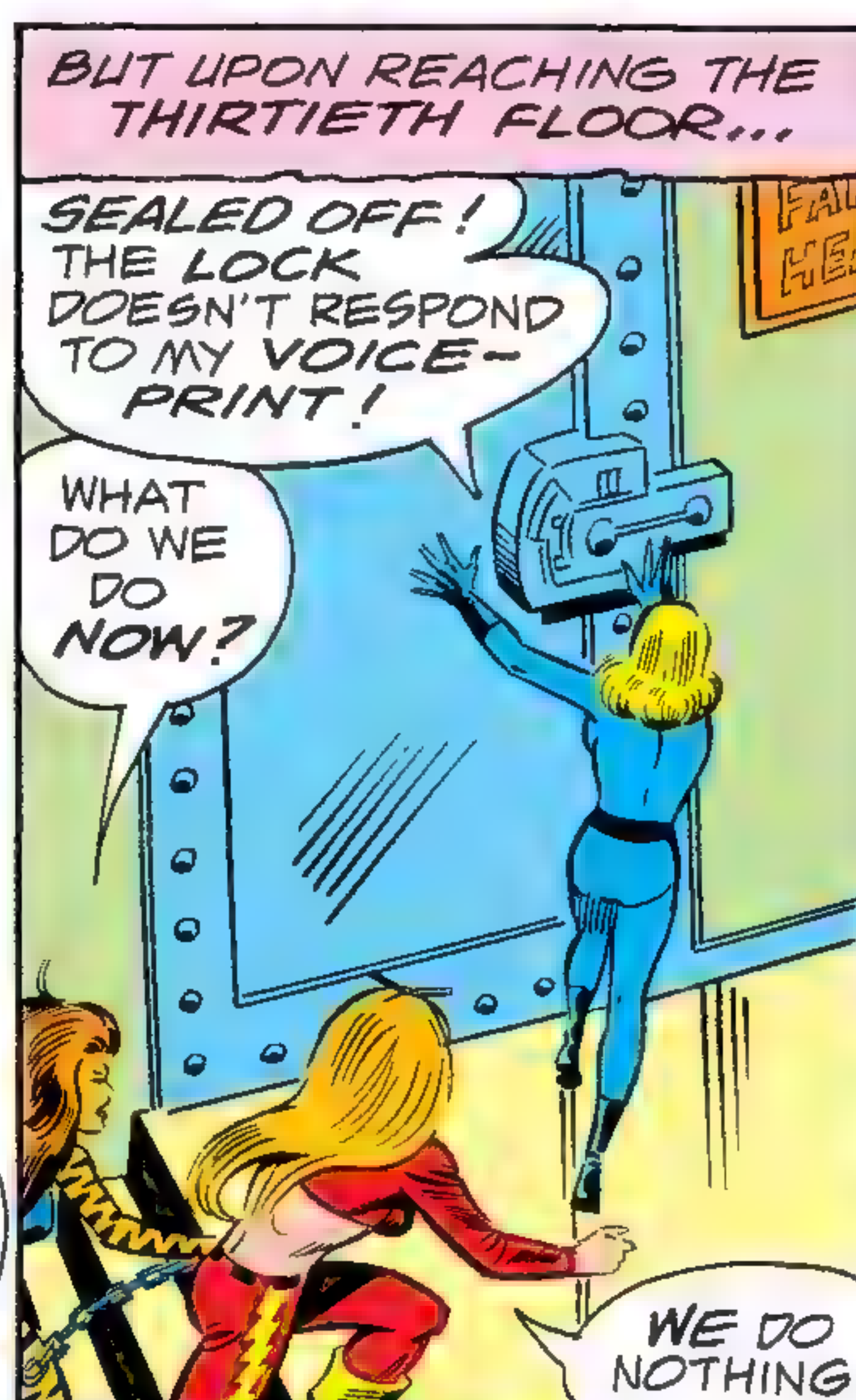
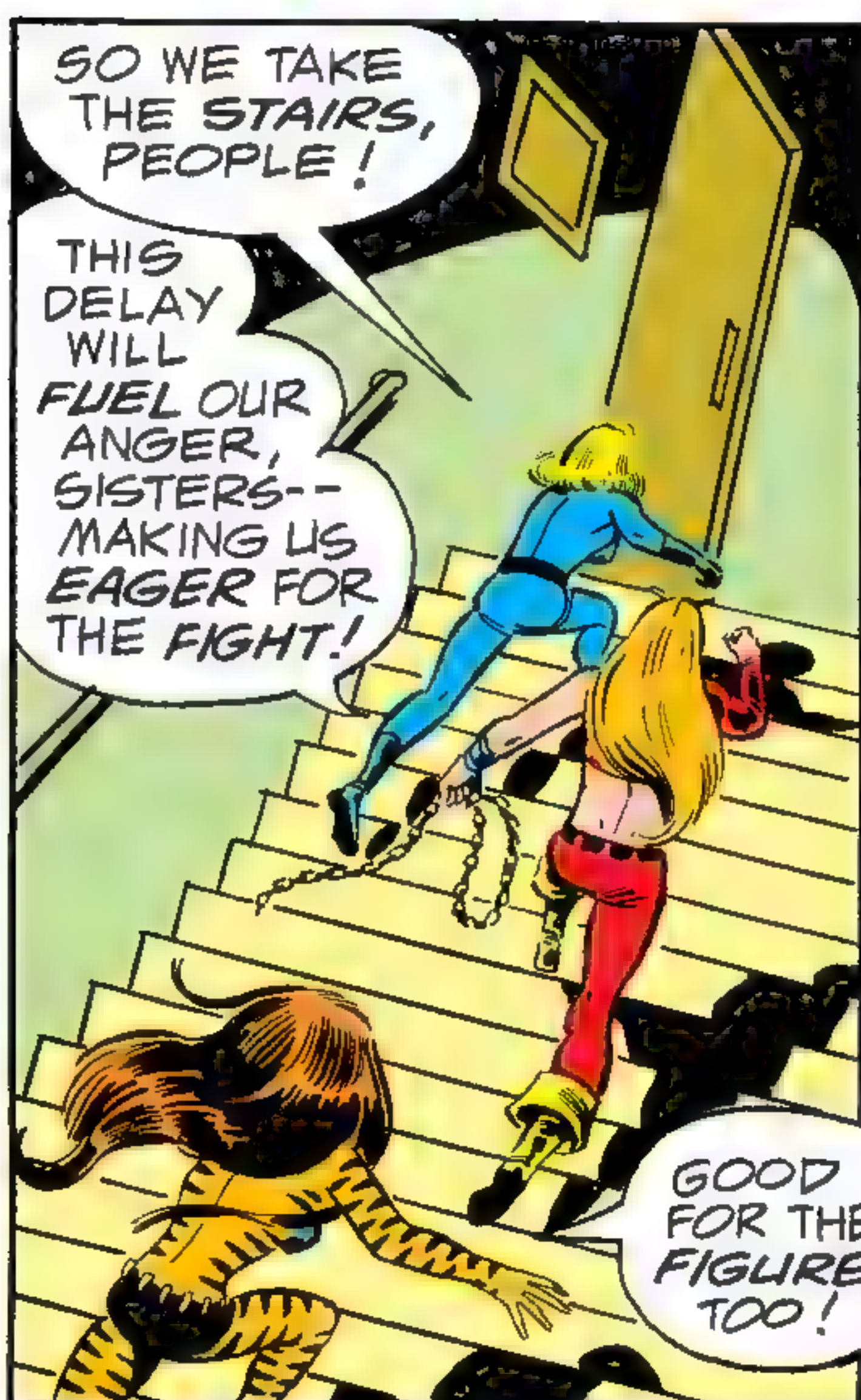
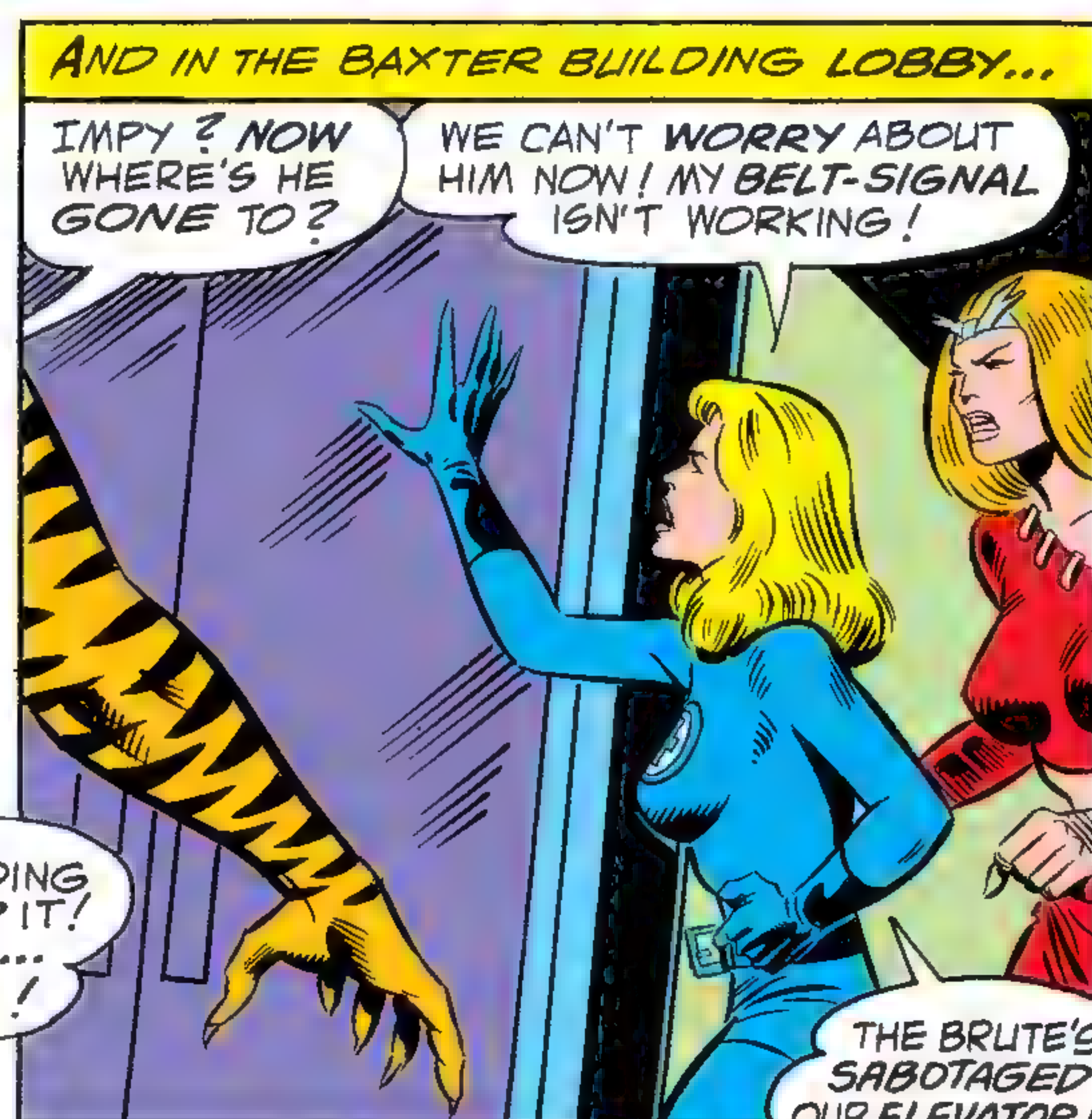
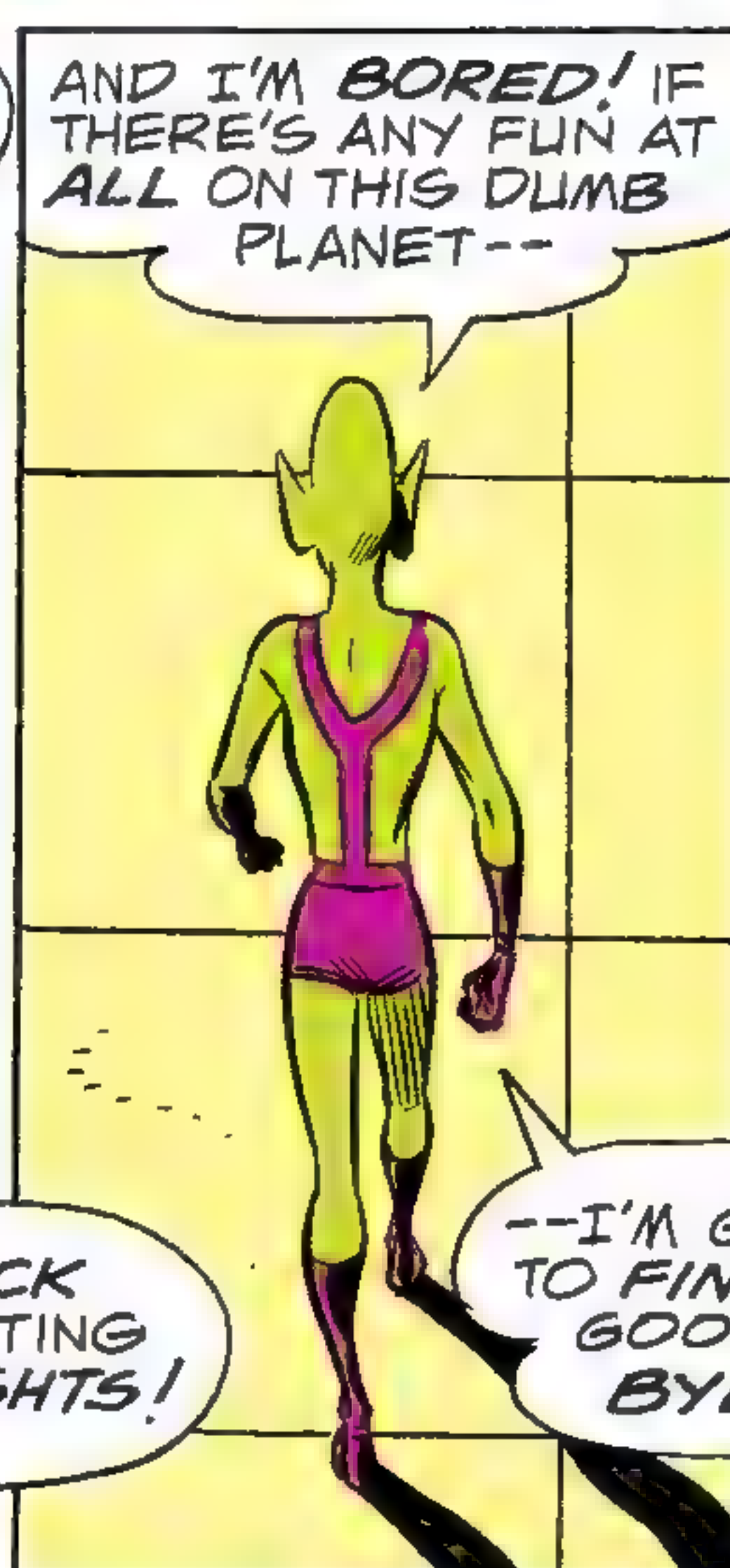
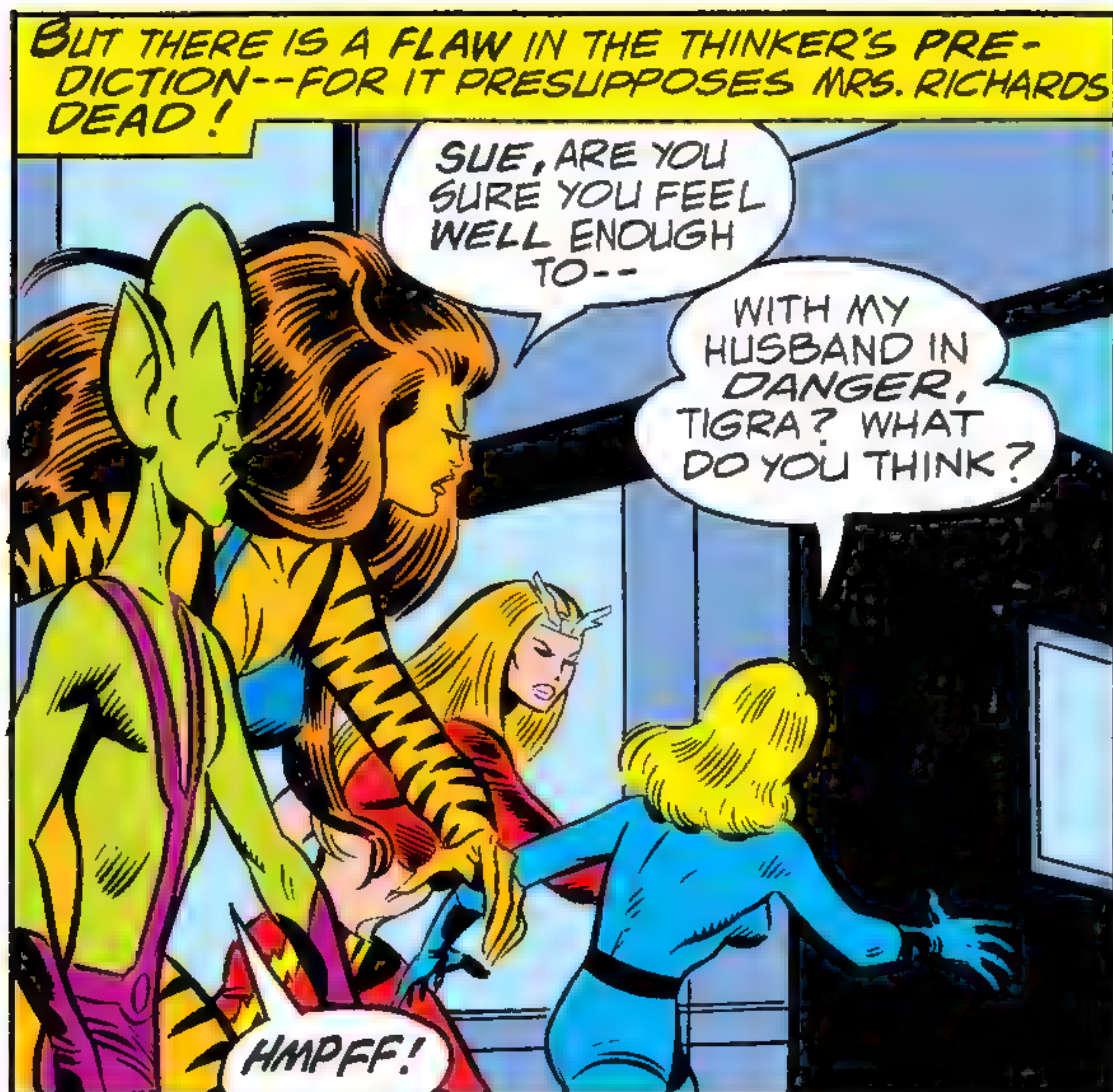
"--UNTIL HE STOOD BEFORE ME... TRANSFORMED! GIGANTIC, INVINCIBLE AND...

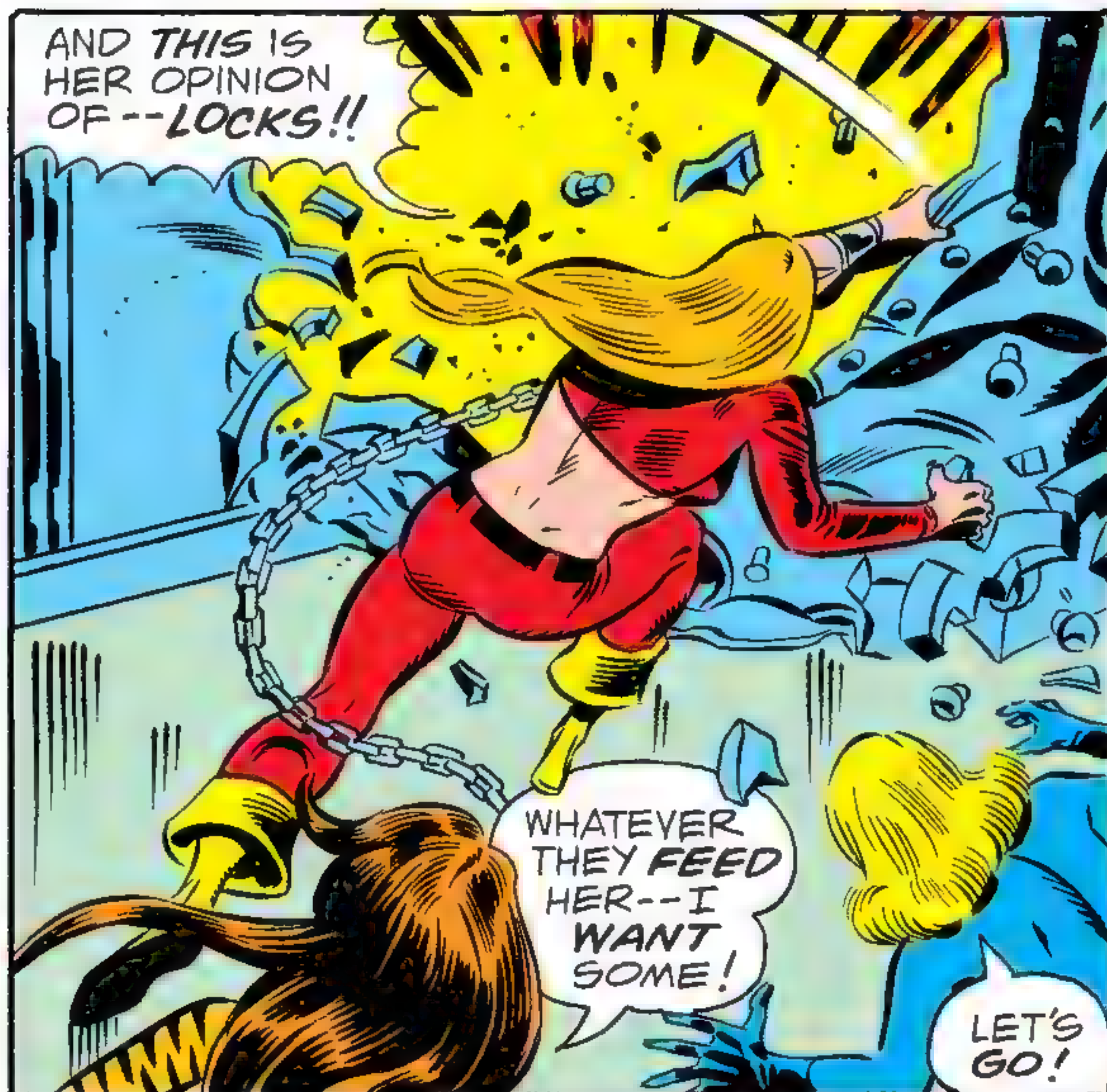


ALIVE! I AM ALIVE!!
YES-- YOU LIVE!
BUT IN DRAINING THE ROD'S POWER-- YOU HAVE ROBBED ME OF IMMORTALITY!





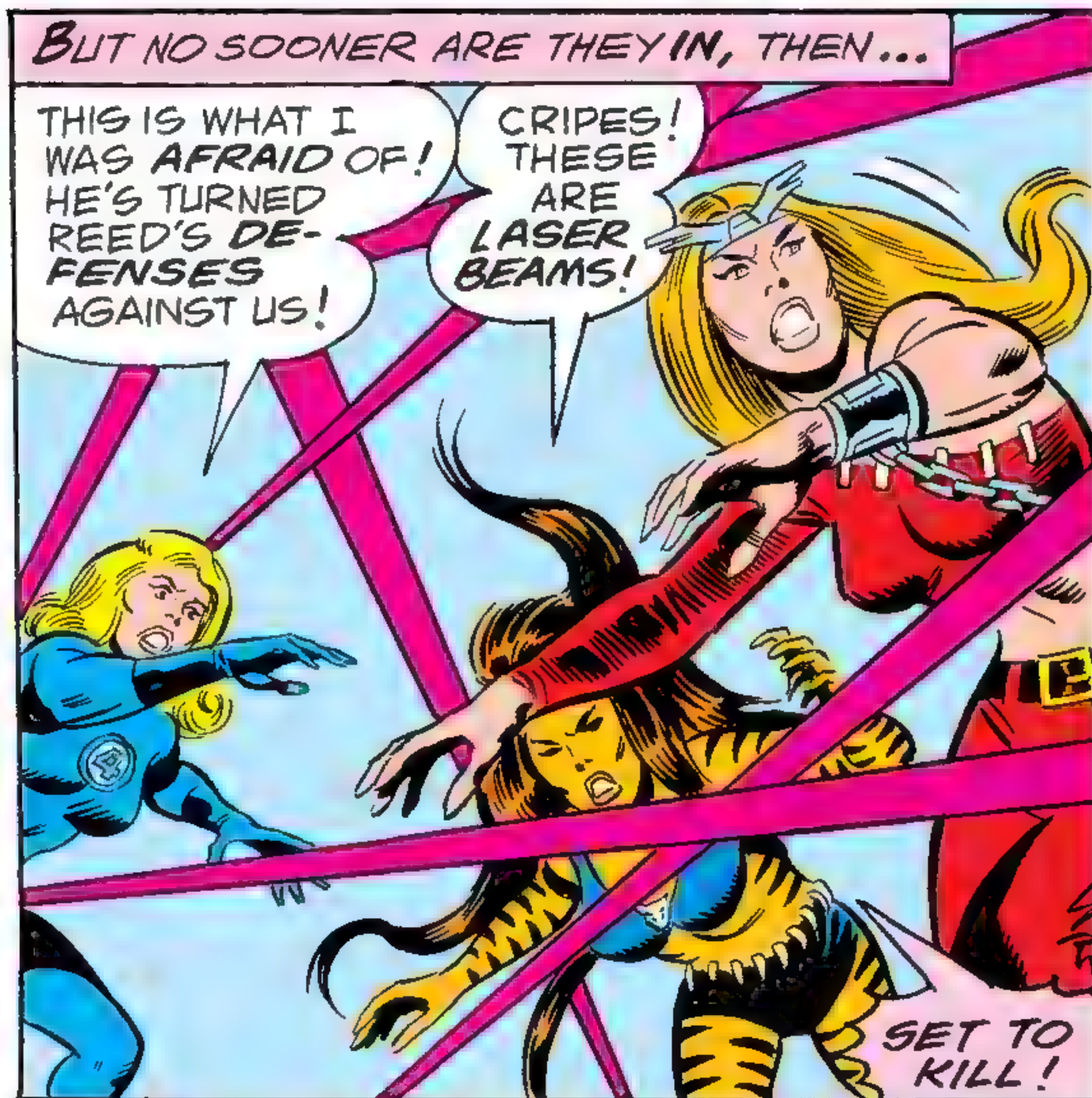




AND THIS IS
HER OPINION
OF --LOCKS!!

WHATEVER
THEY FEED
HER--I
WANT
SOME!

LET'S
GO!



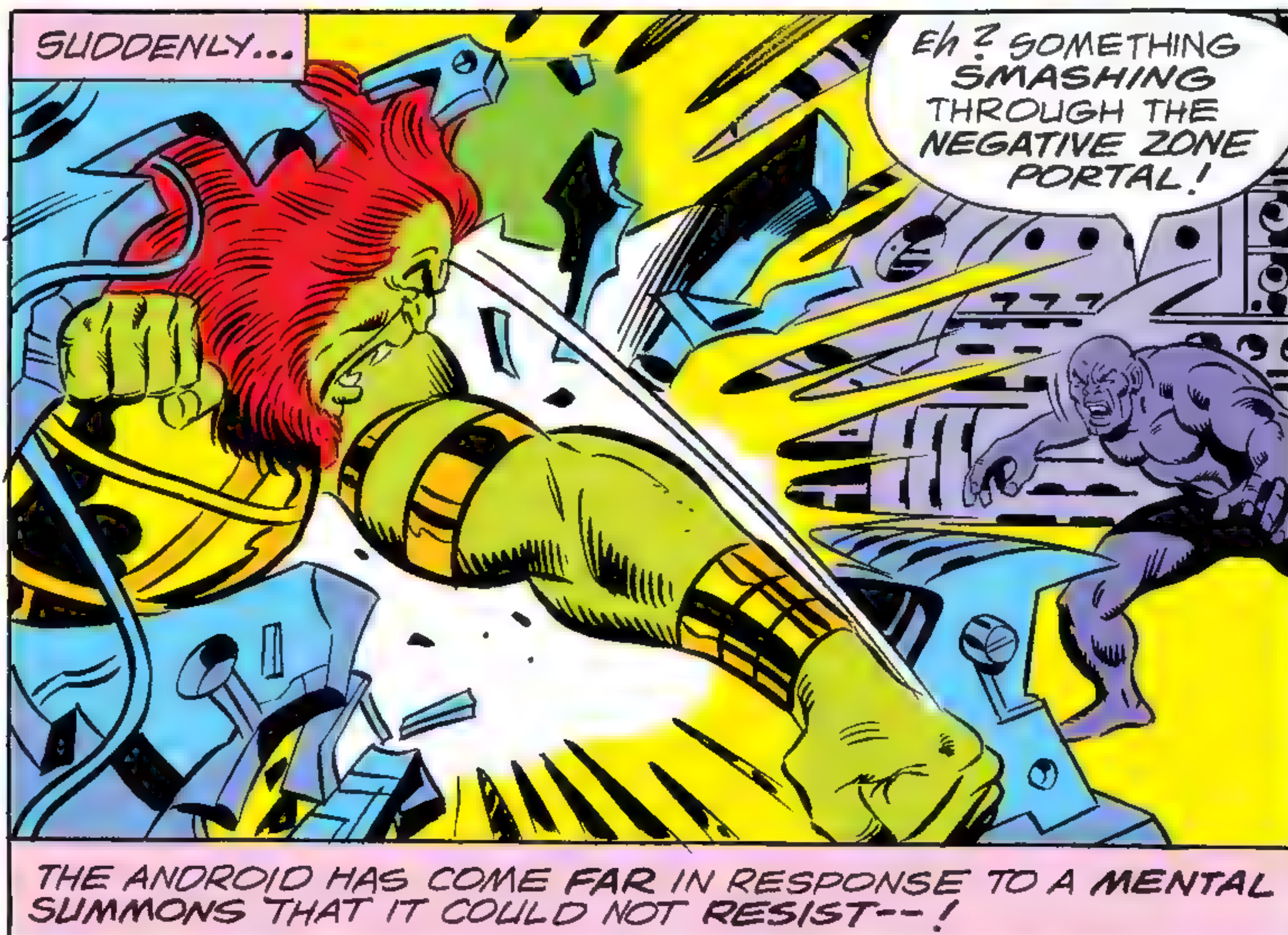
BUT NO SOONER ARE THEY IN, THEN...
THIS IS WHAT I
WAS AFRAID OF!
HE'S TURNED
REED'S DE-
FENSES
AGAINST US!

CRIPES!
THESE
ARE
LASER
BEAMS!

SET TO
KILL!



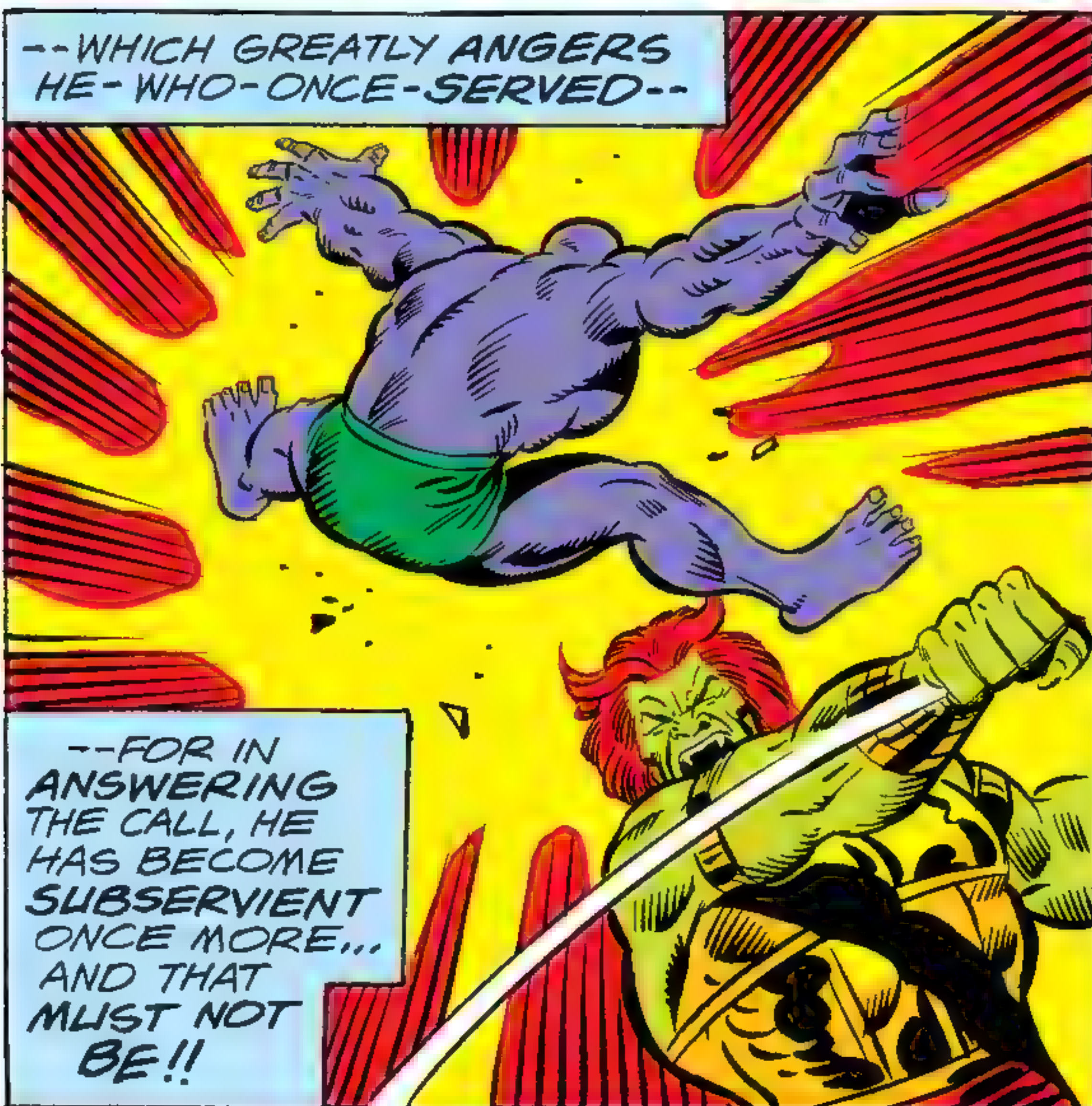
THEY'VE DISCOVERED MY
MODIFICATIONS--TOO
LATE TO DO THEM
ANY GOOD!



SUDDENLY...

EH? SOMETHING
SMASHING
THROUGH THE
NEGATIVE ZONE
PORTAL!

THE ANDROID HAS COME FAR IN RESPONSE TO A MENTAL
SUMMONS THAT IT COULD NOT RESIST--!



--WHICH GREATLY ANGERS
HE-WHO-ONCE-SERVED--

--FOR IN
ANSWERING
THE CALL, HE
HAS BECOME
SUBSERVIENT
ONCE MORE...
AND THAT
MUST NOT
BE!!



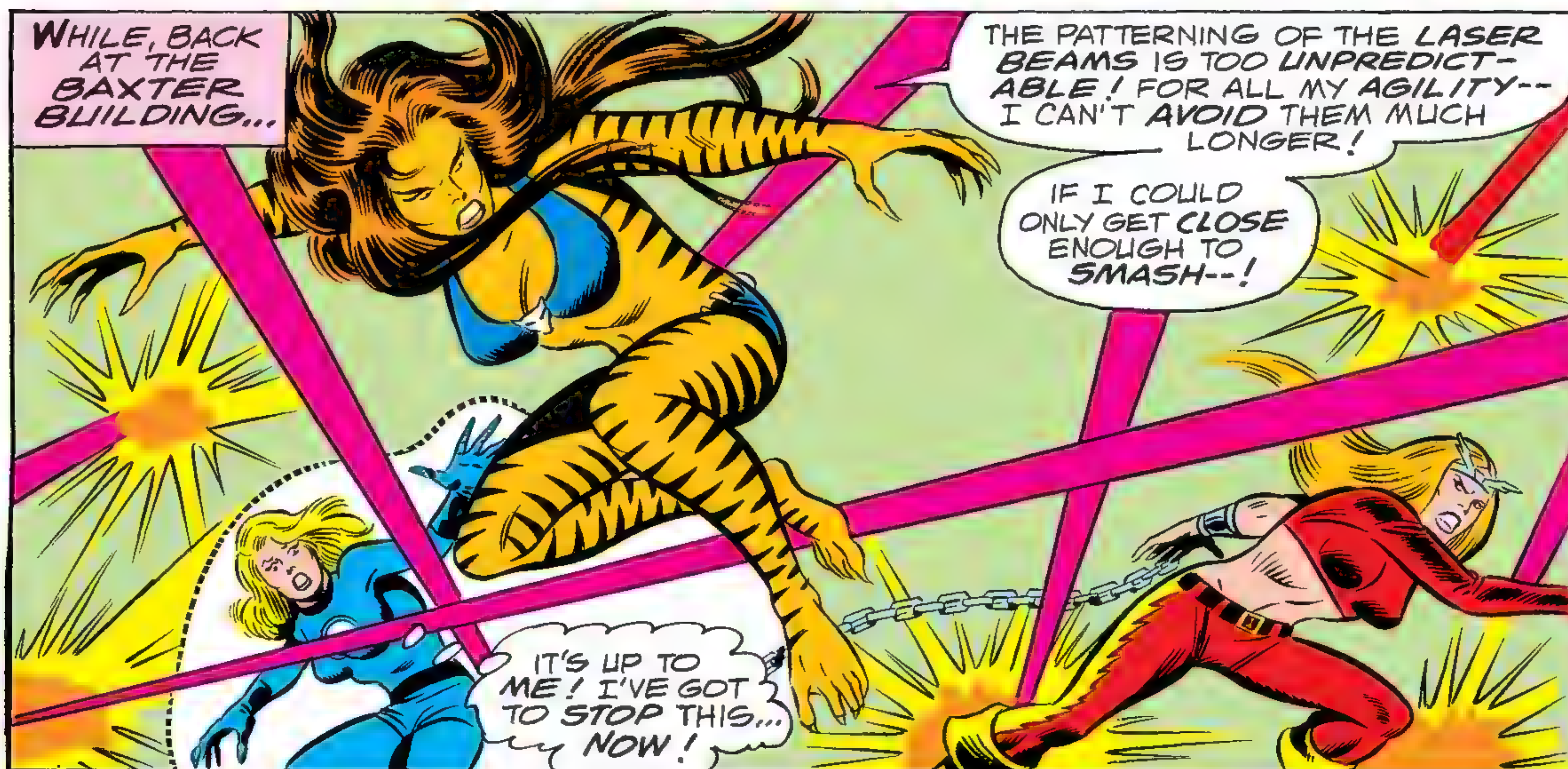
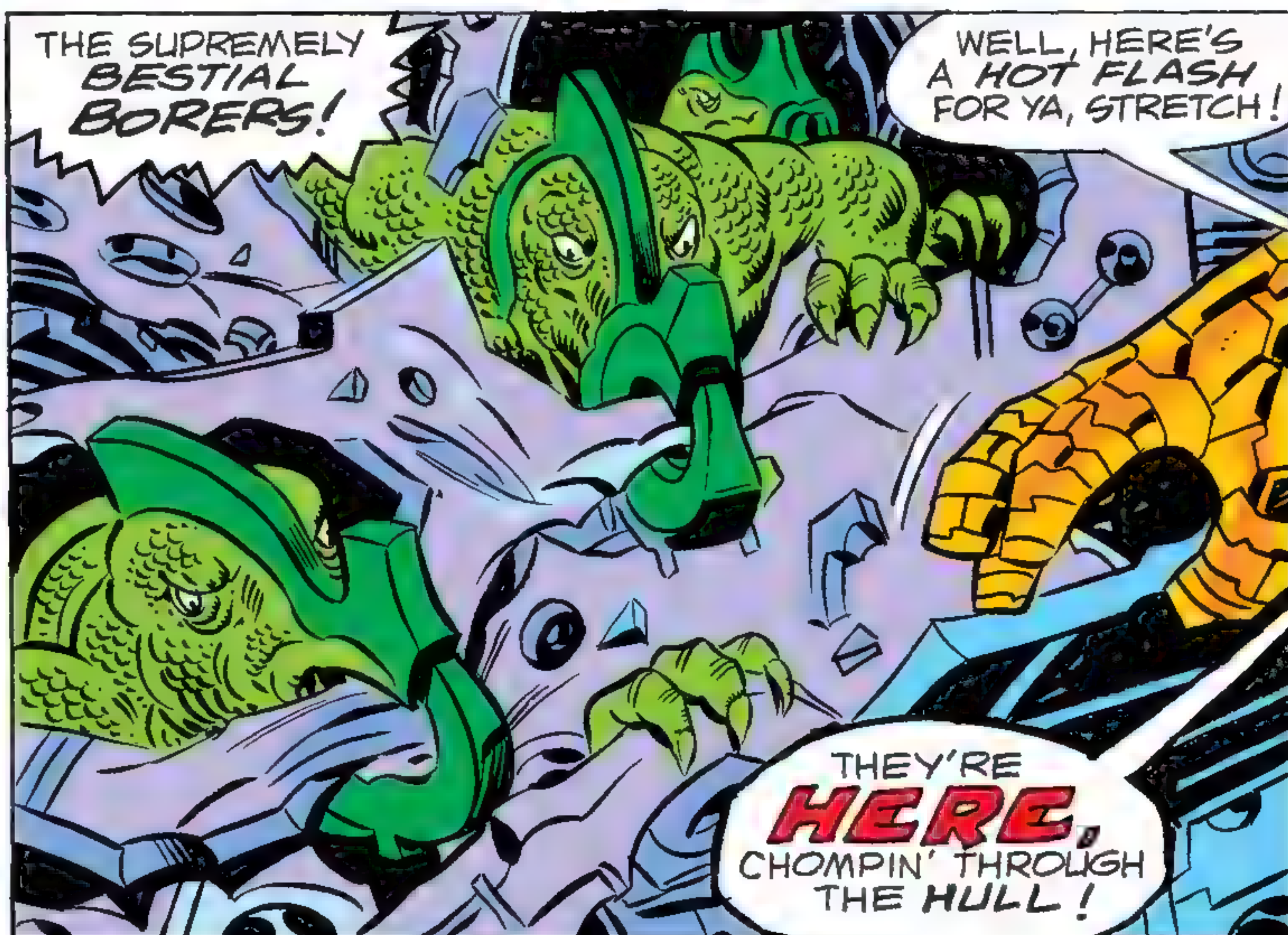
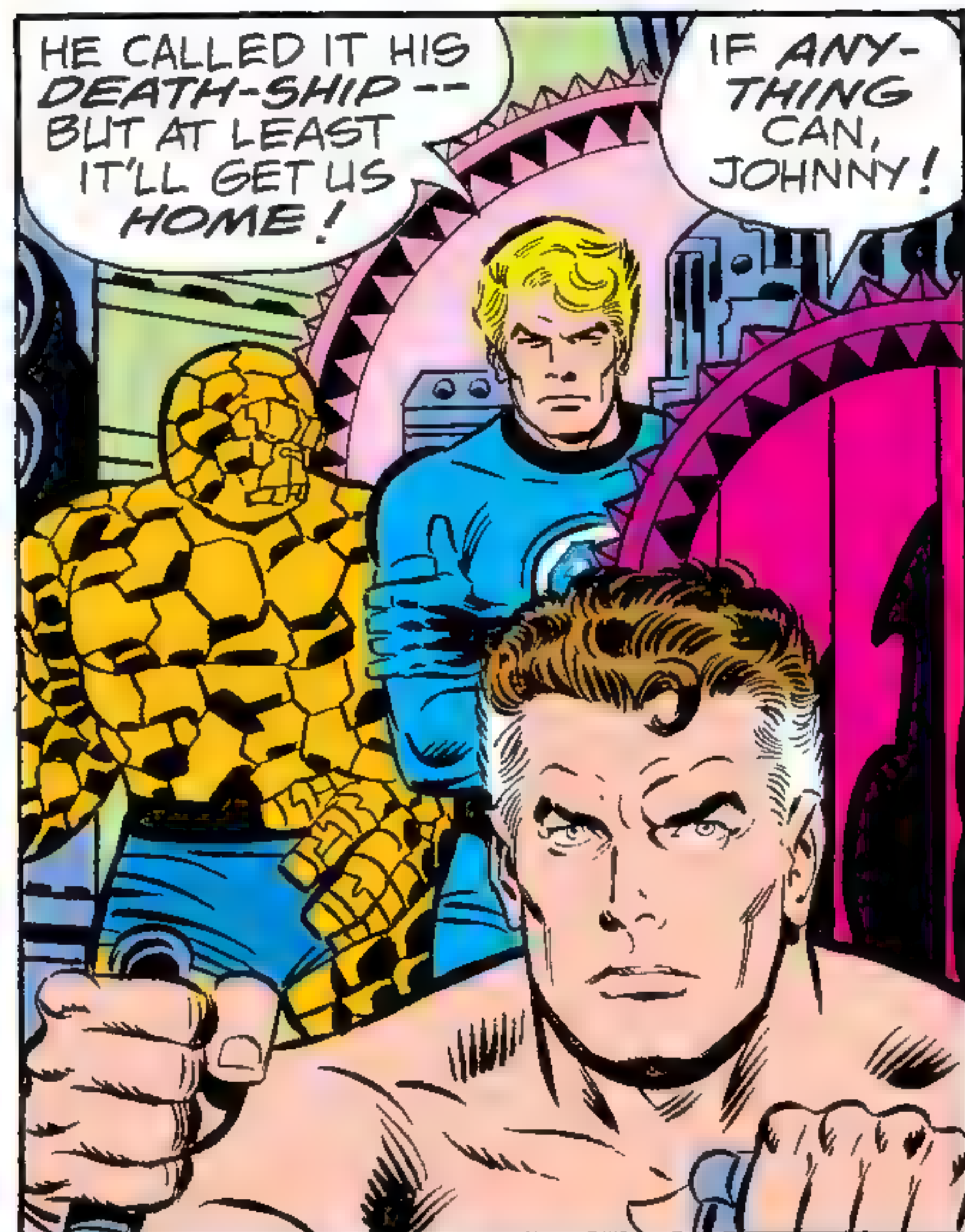
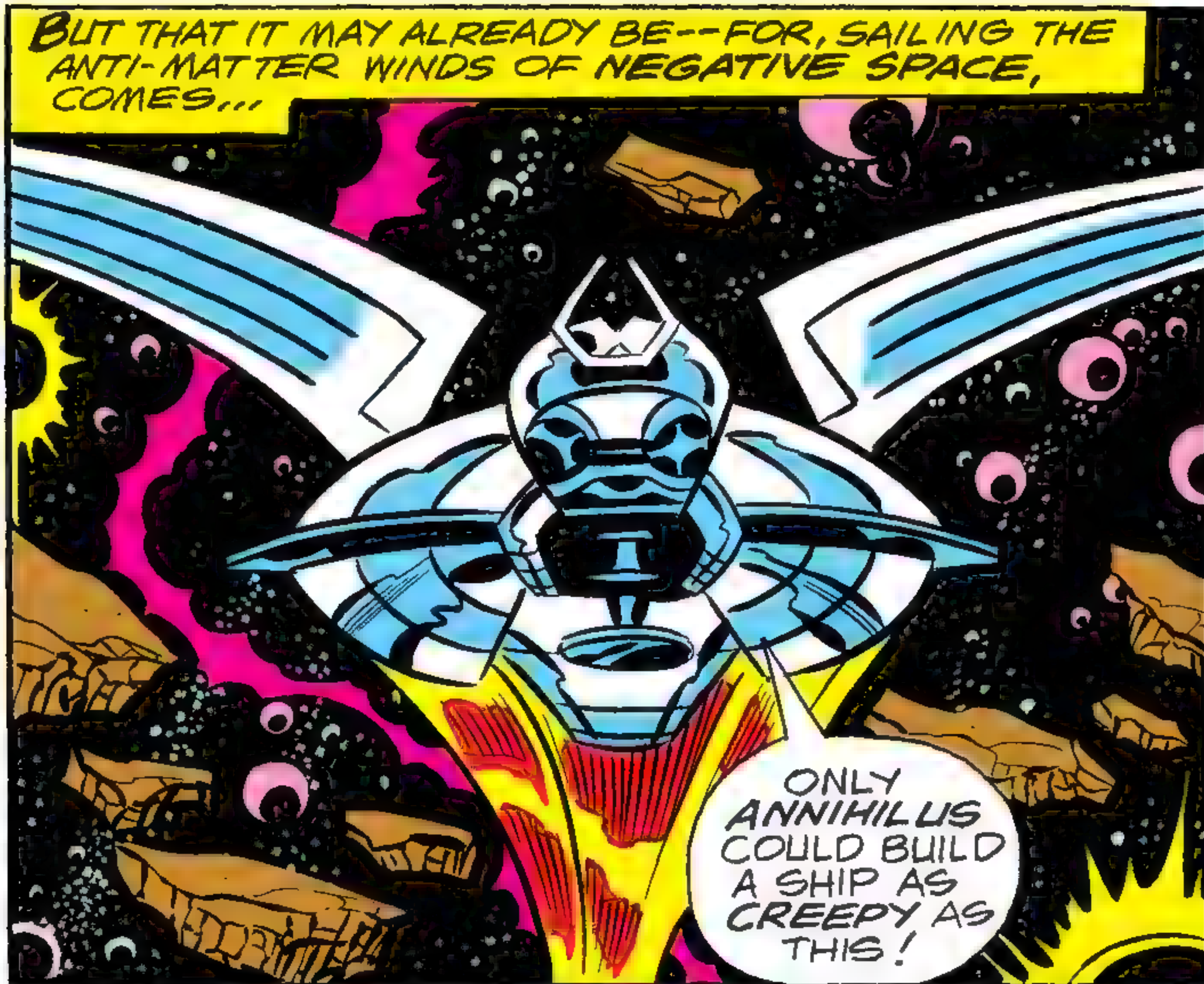
YOU CALLED...
AND I HAVE
COME!

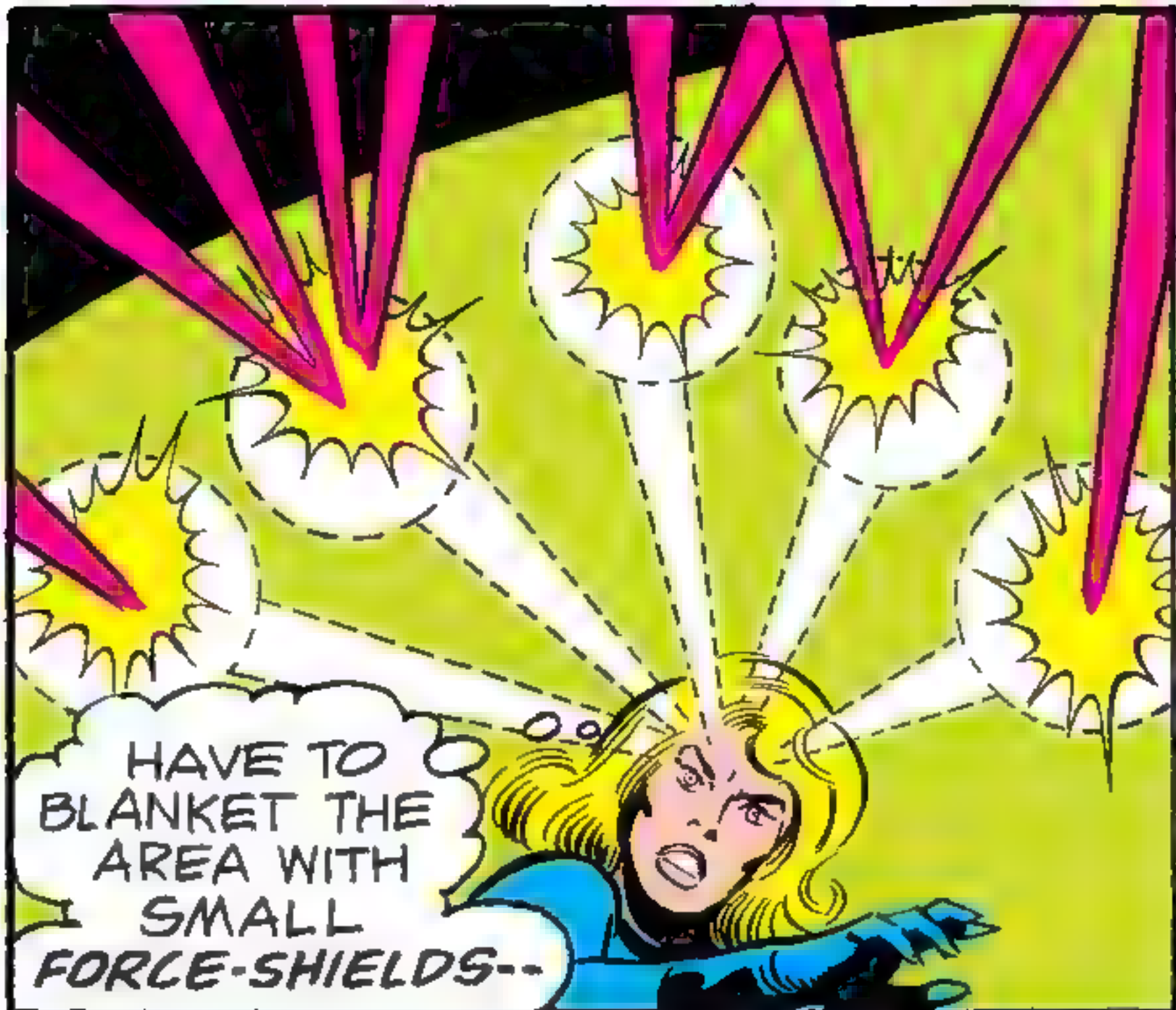
BUT... I... WILL...
NOT... SERVE!

THE CREATURE
IS MAD--BUT
IF HE COULD
REACH THE
PORTAL, SO
CAN THE
FANTASTIC
FOUR!

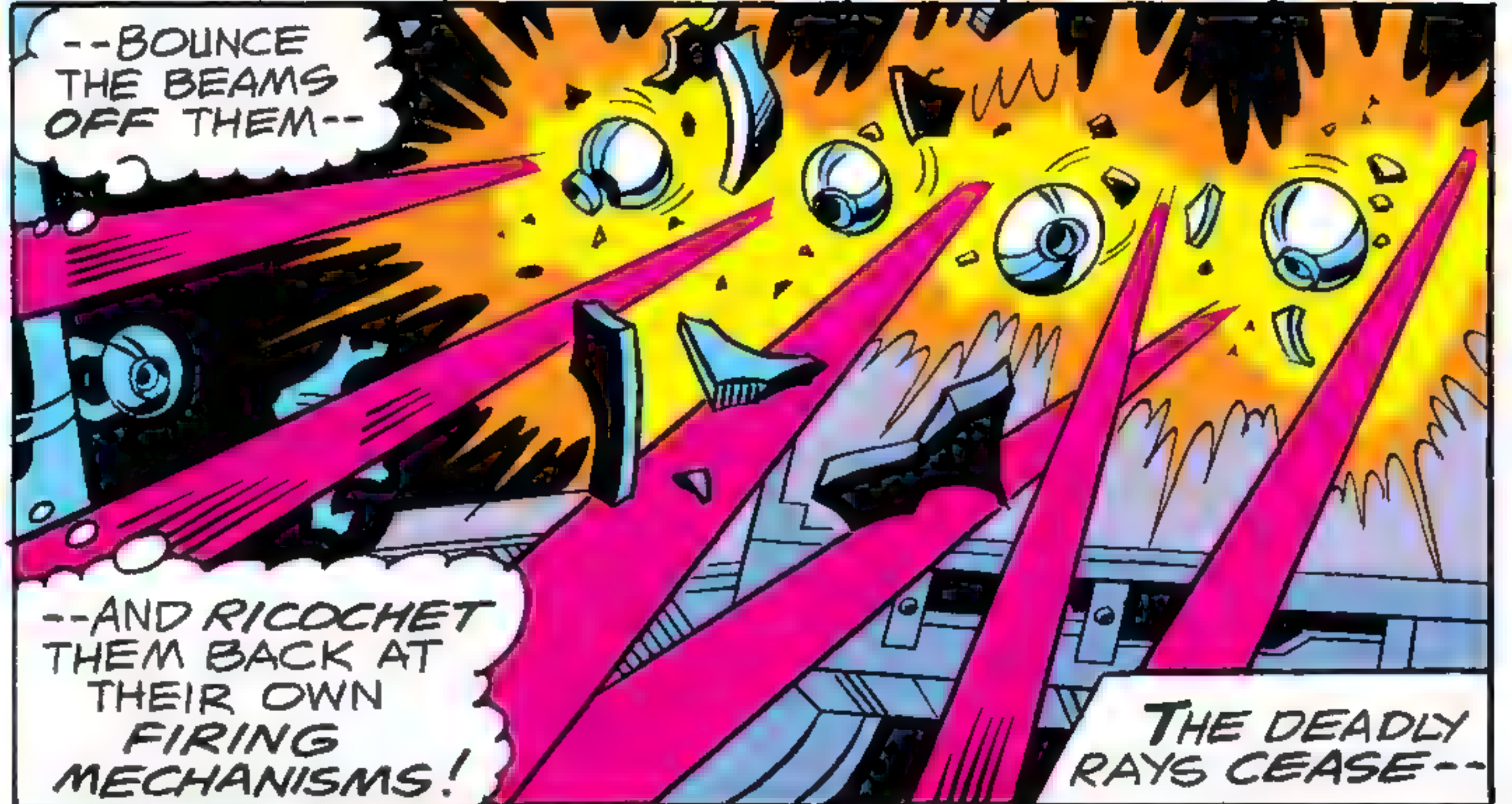
MUST
SEAL
IT--

--BEFORE
IT'S TOO
LATE!





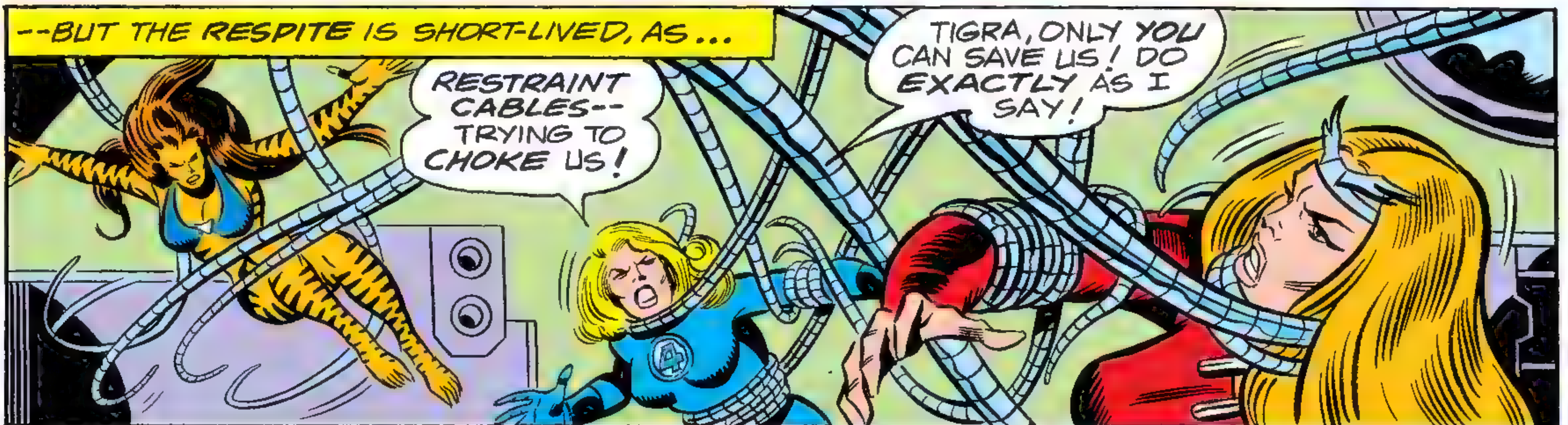
HAVE TO
BLANKET THE
AREA WITH
SMALL
FORCE-SHIELDS--



--BOUNCE
THE BEAMS
OFF THEM--

--AND RICOCHET
THEM BACK AT
THEIR OWN
FIRING
MECHANISMS!

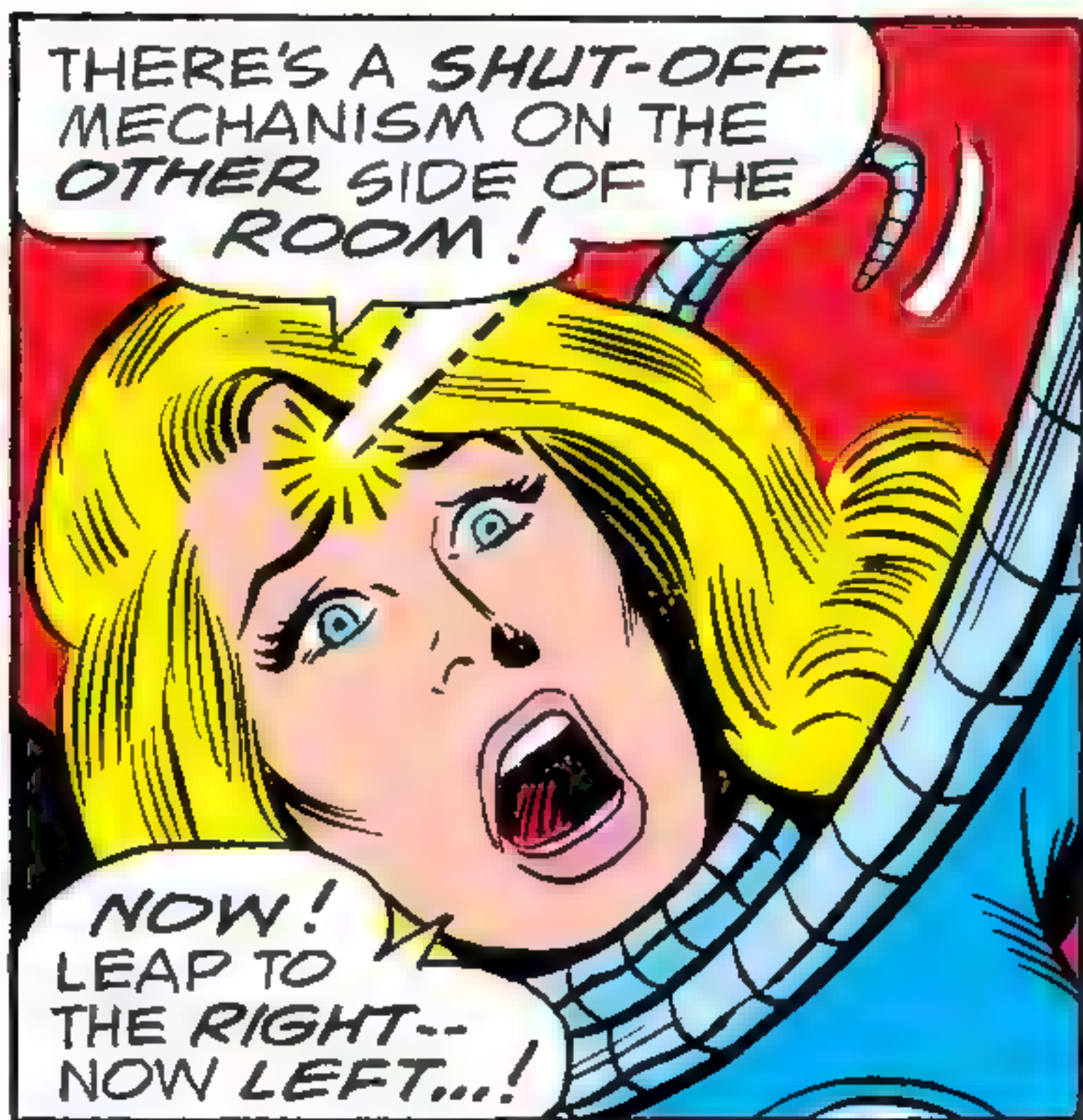
THE DEADLY
RAYS CEASE--



--BUT THE RESPITE IS SHORT-LIVED, AS ...

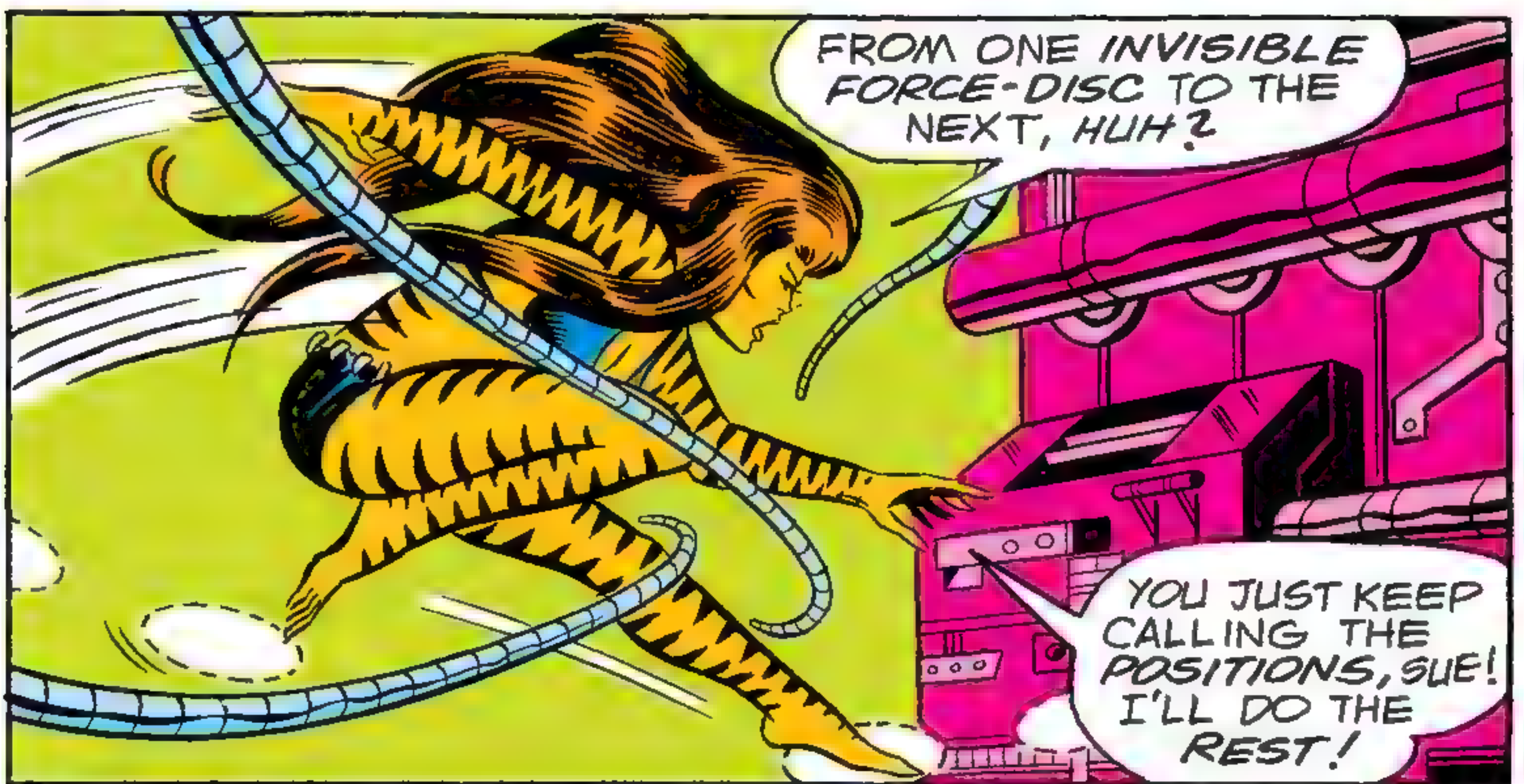
RESTRAINT
CABLES--
TRYING TO
CHOKES US!

TIGRA, ONLY YOU
CAN SAVE US! DO
EXACTLY AS I
SAY!



THERE'S A SHUT-OFF
MECHANISM ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE
ROOM!

NOW!
LEAP TO
THE RIGHT--
NOW LEFT...!

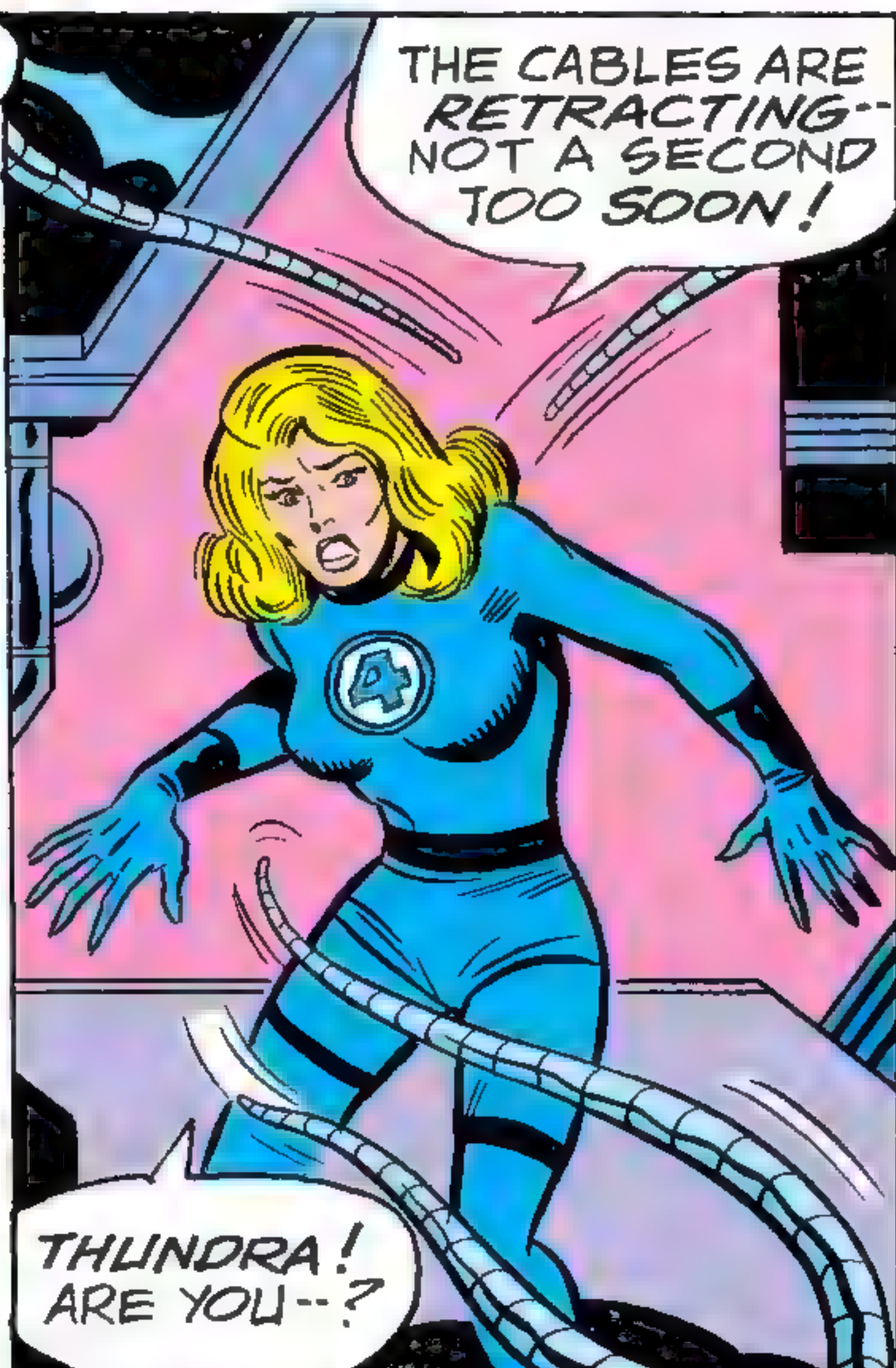


FROM ONE INVISIBLE
FORCE-DISC TO THE
NEXT, HUH?

YOU JUST KEEP
CALLING THE
POSITIONS, SUE!
I'LL DO THE
REST!

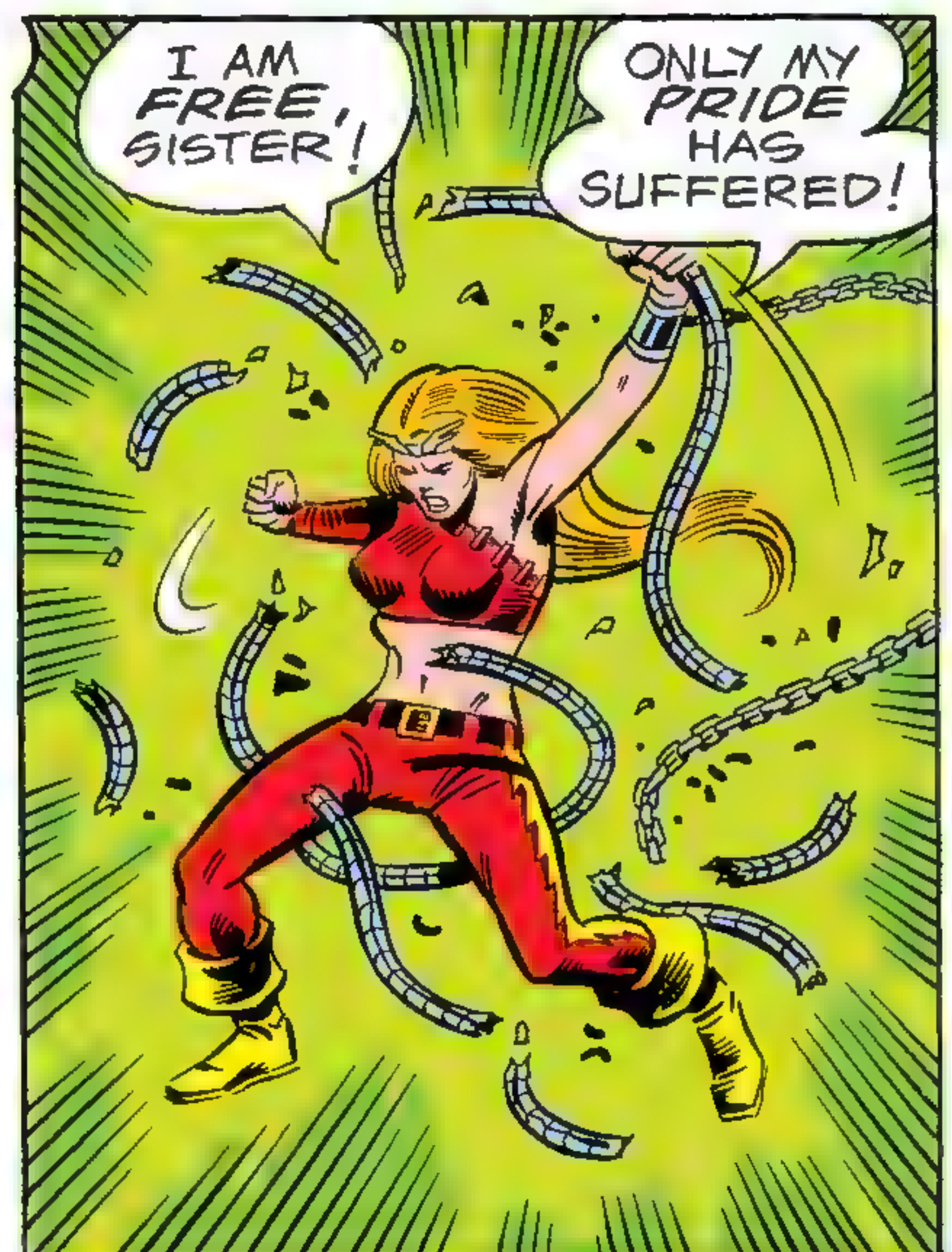


THERE! I'VE REACHED
THE MANUAL
CUT-OFF LEVER!



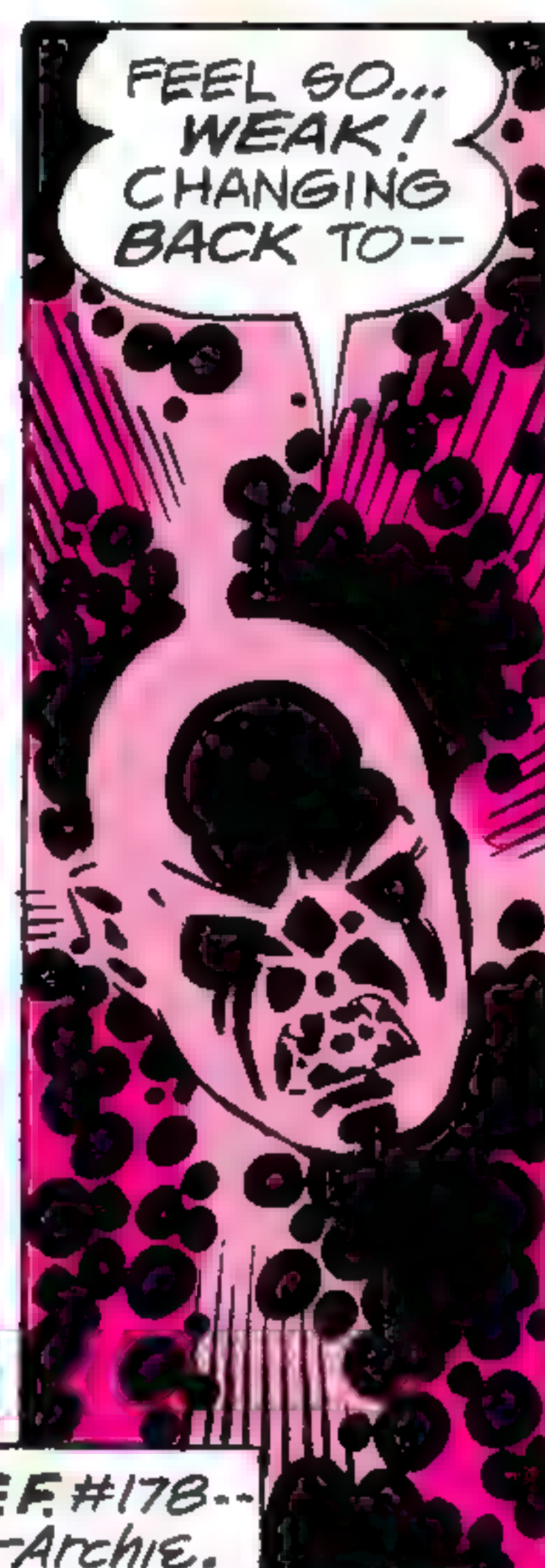
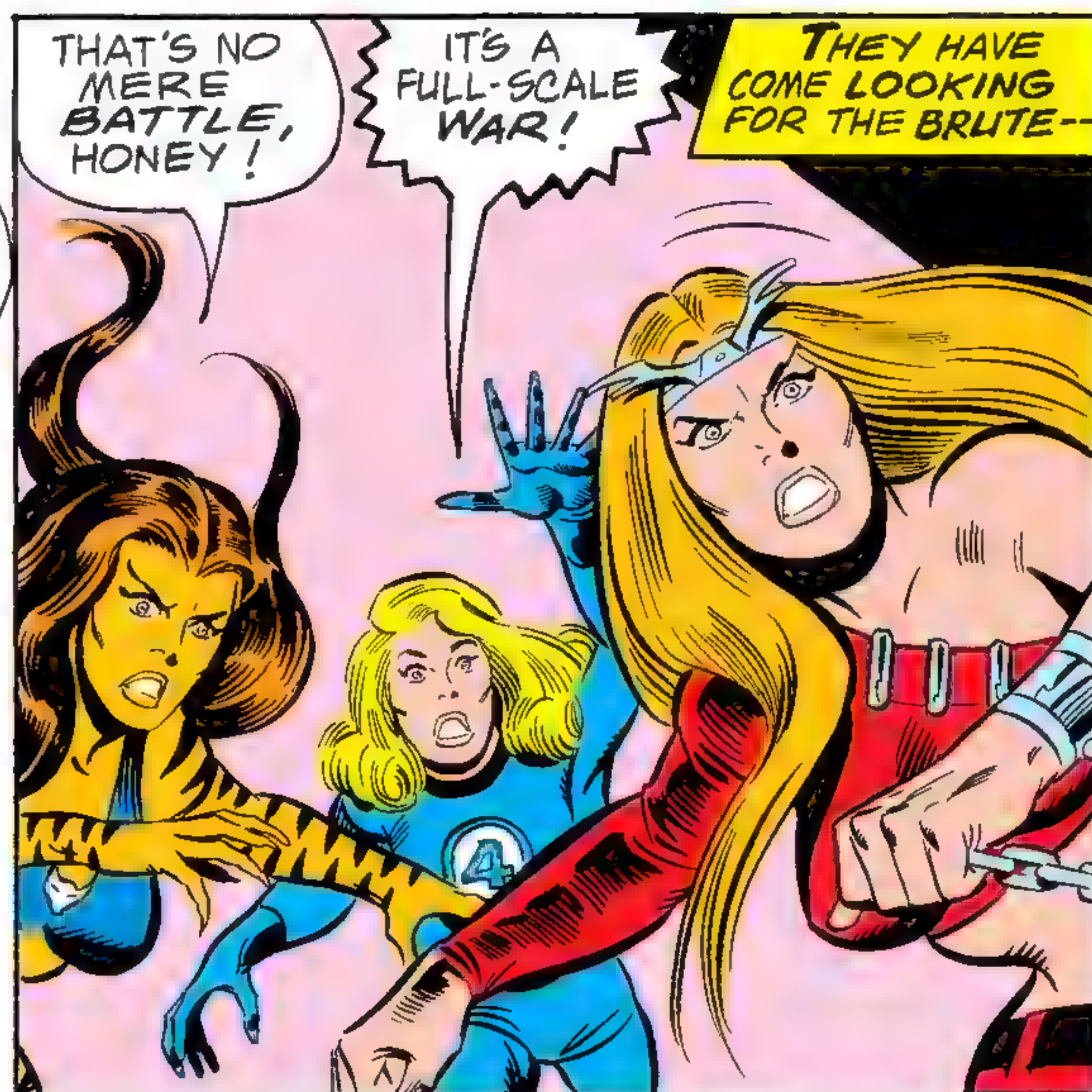
THE CABLES ARE
RETRACTING--
NOT A SECOND
TOO SOON!

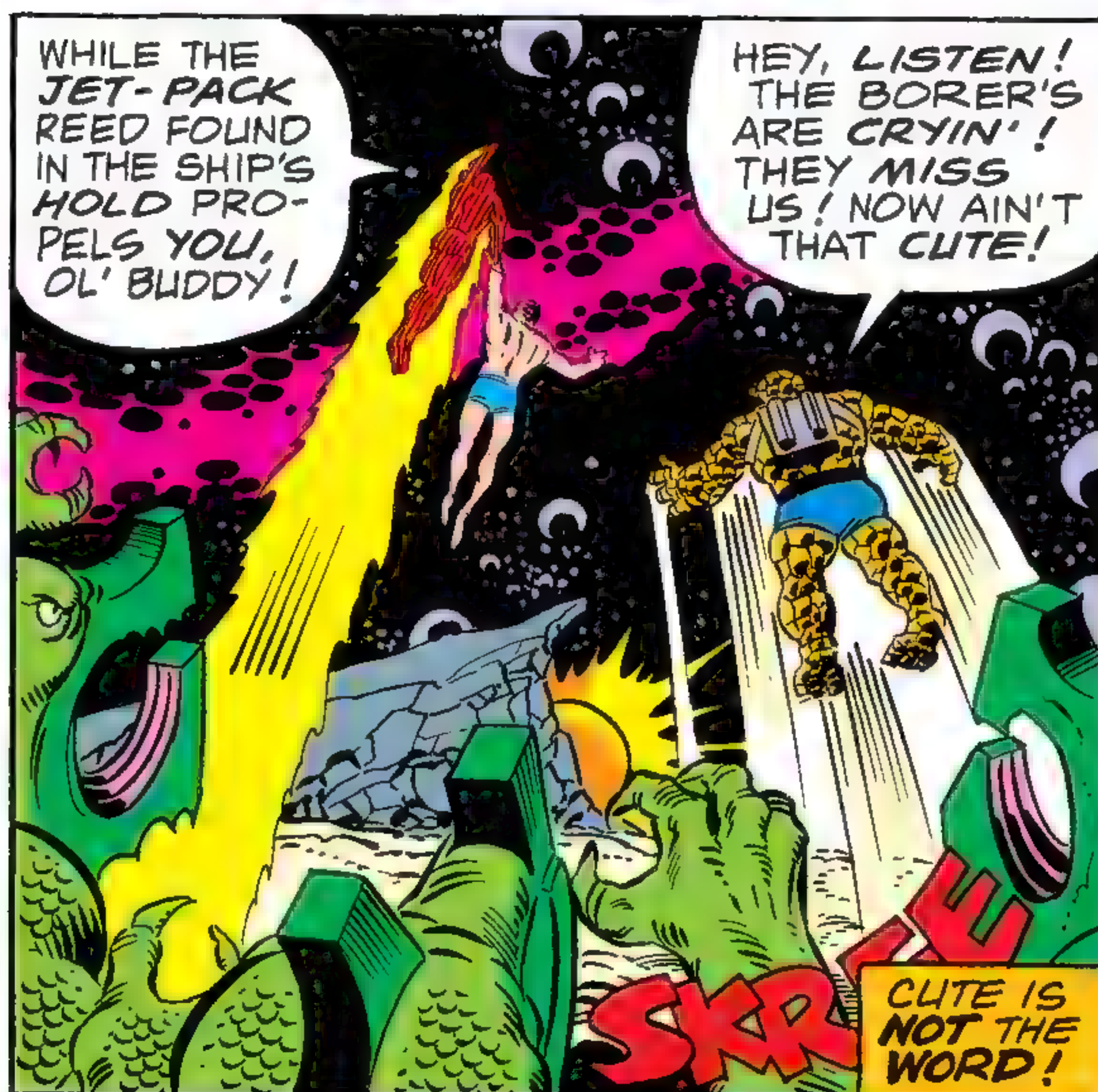
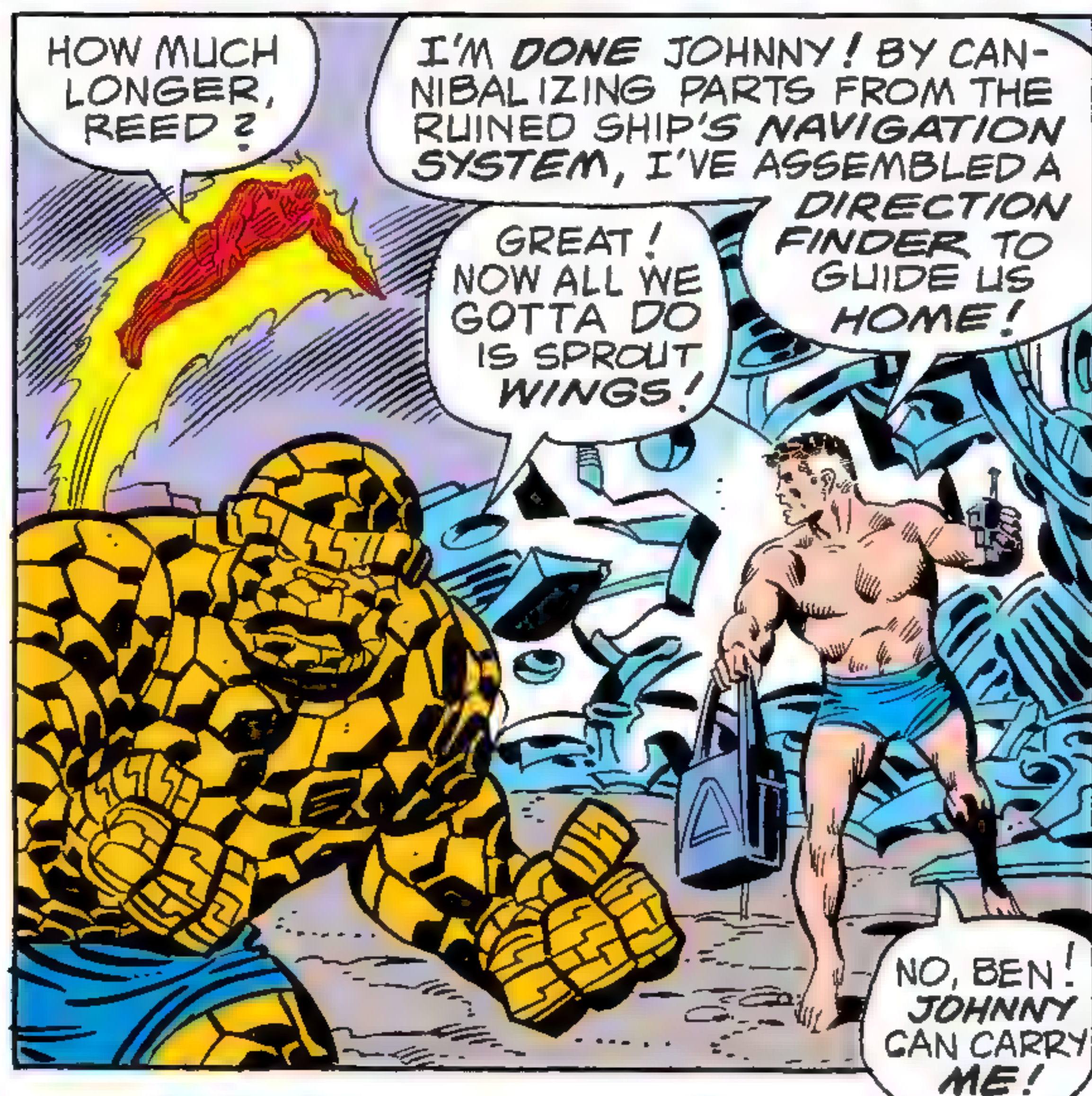
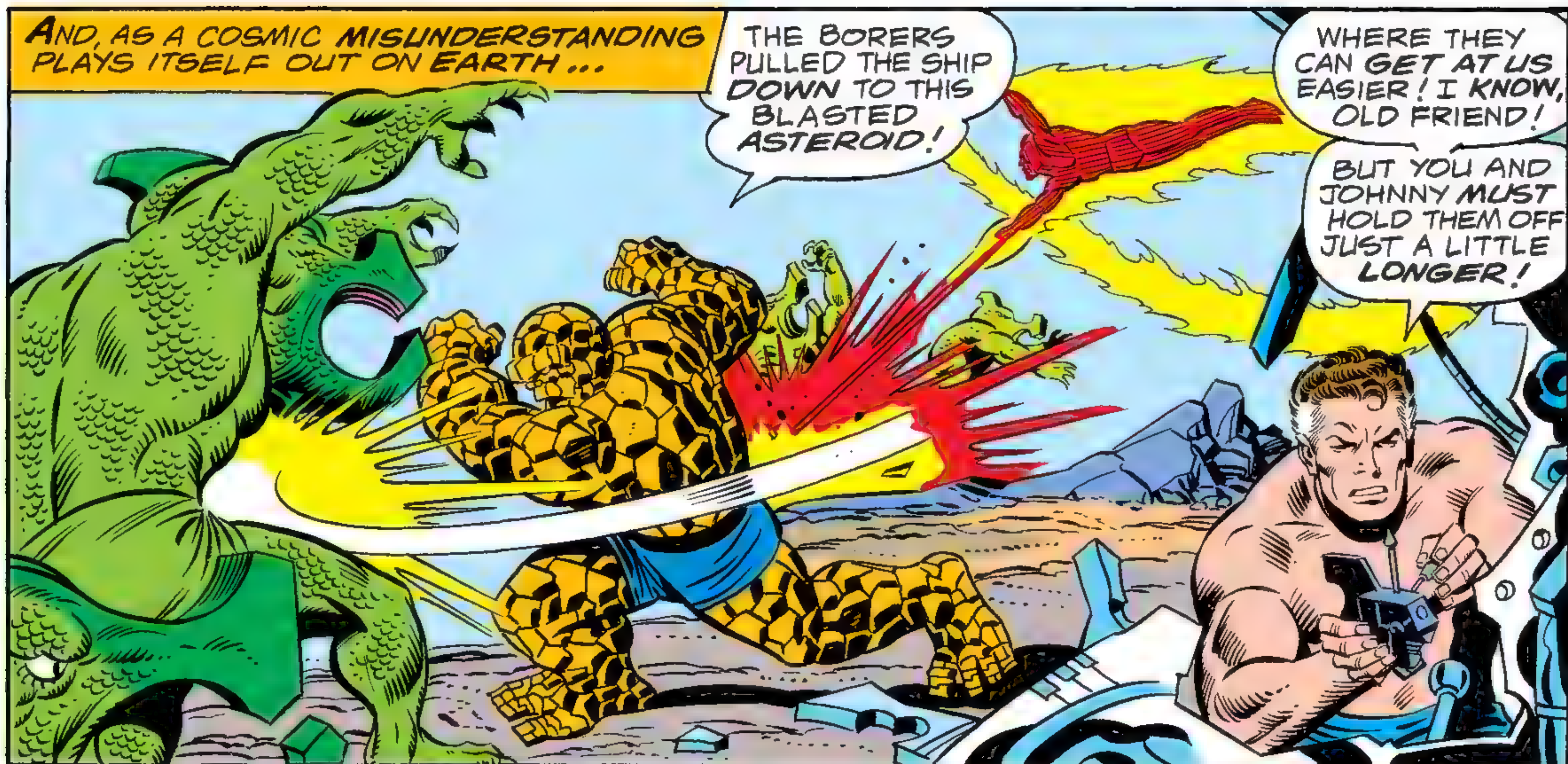
THUNDRA!
ARE YOU--?

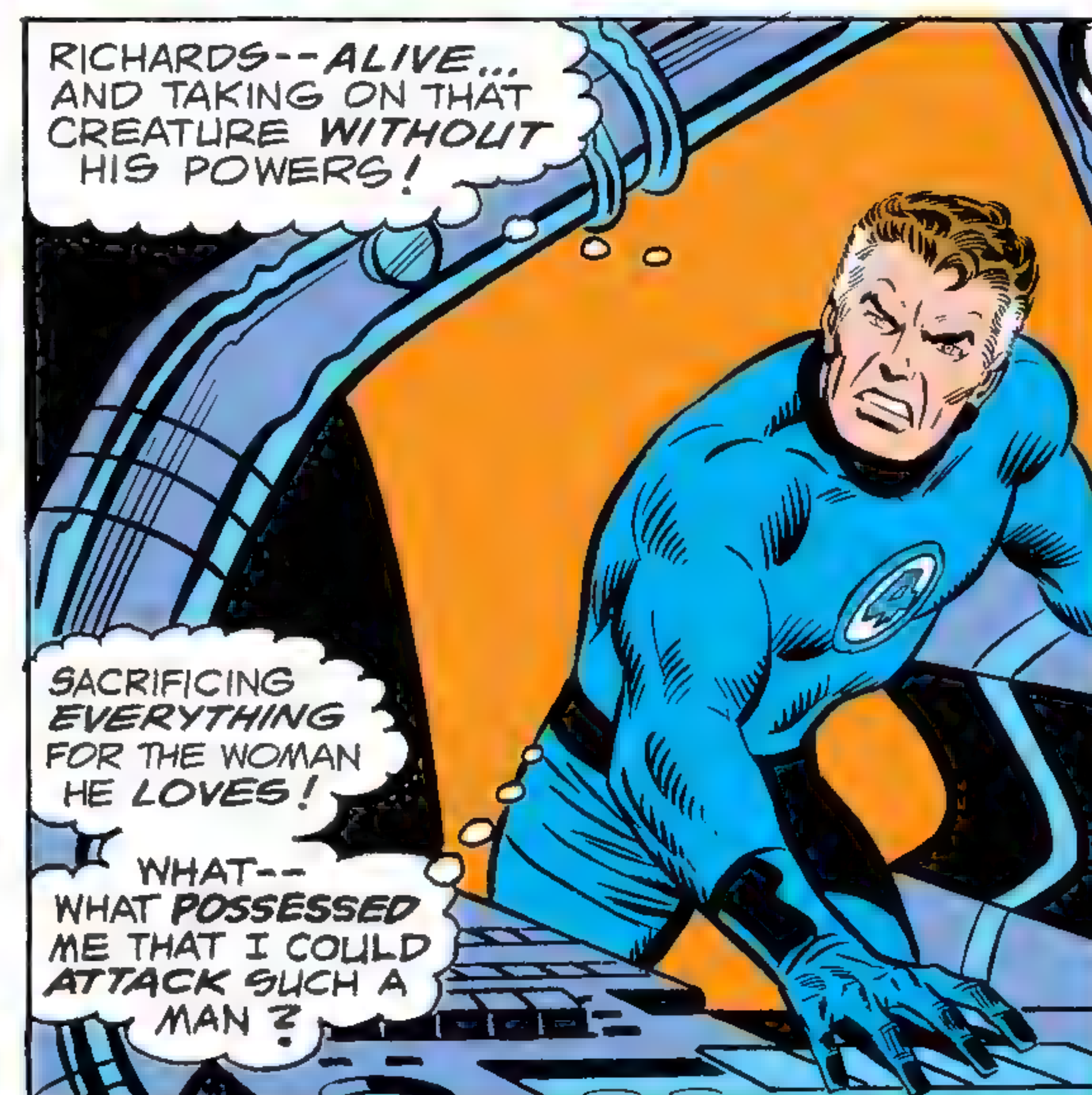
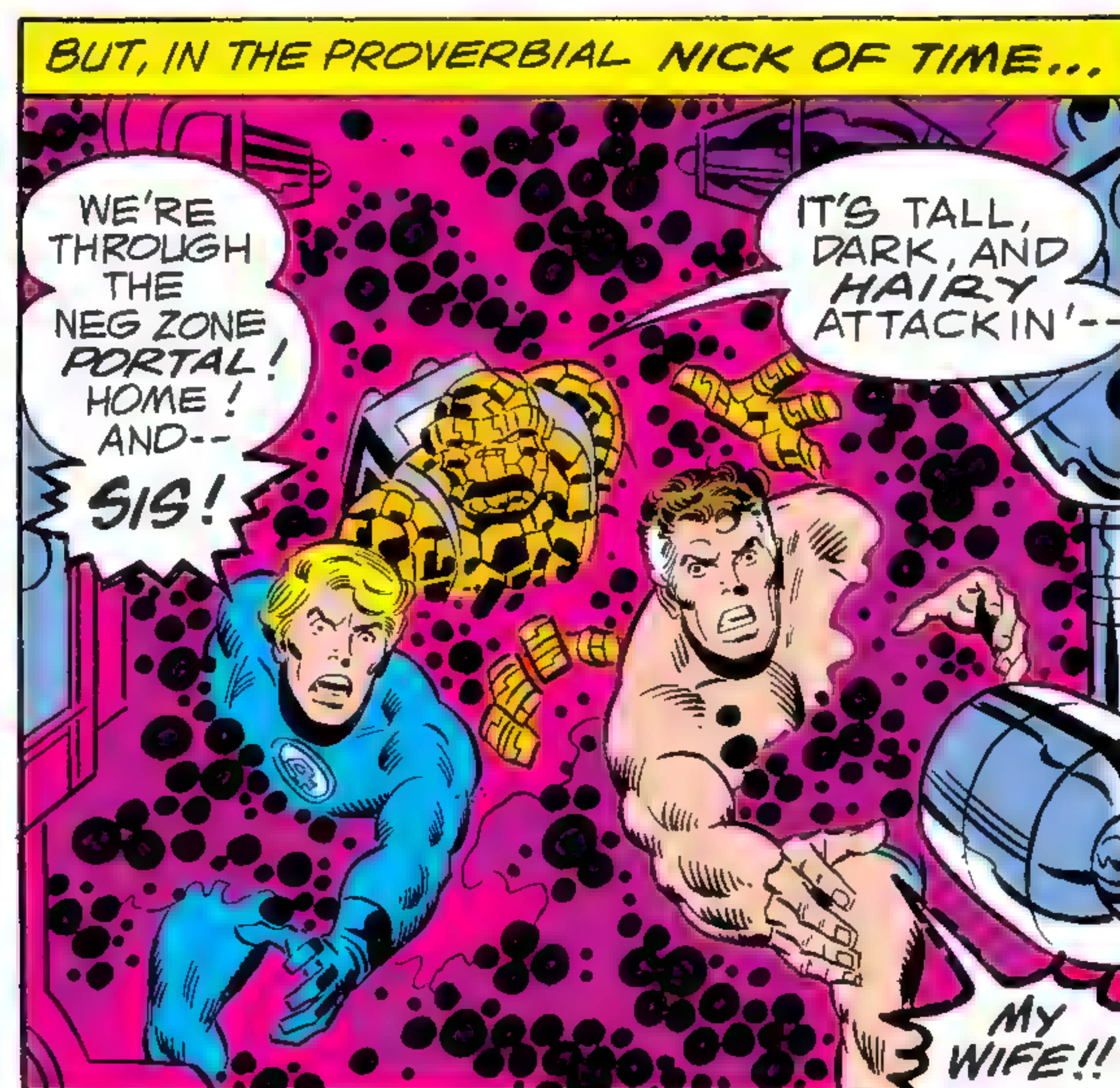
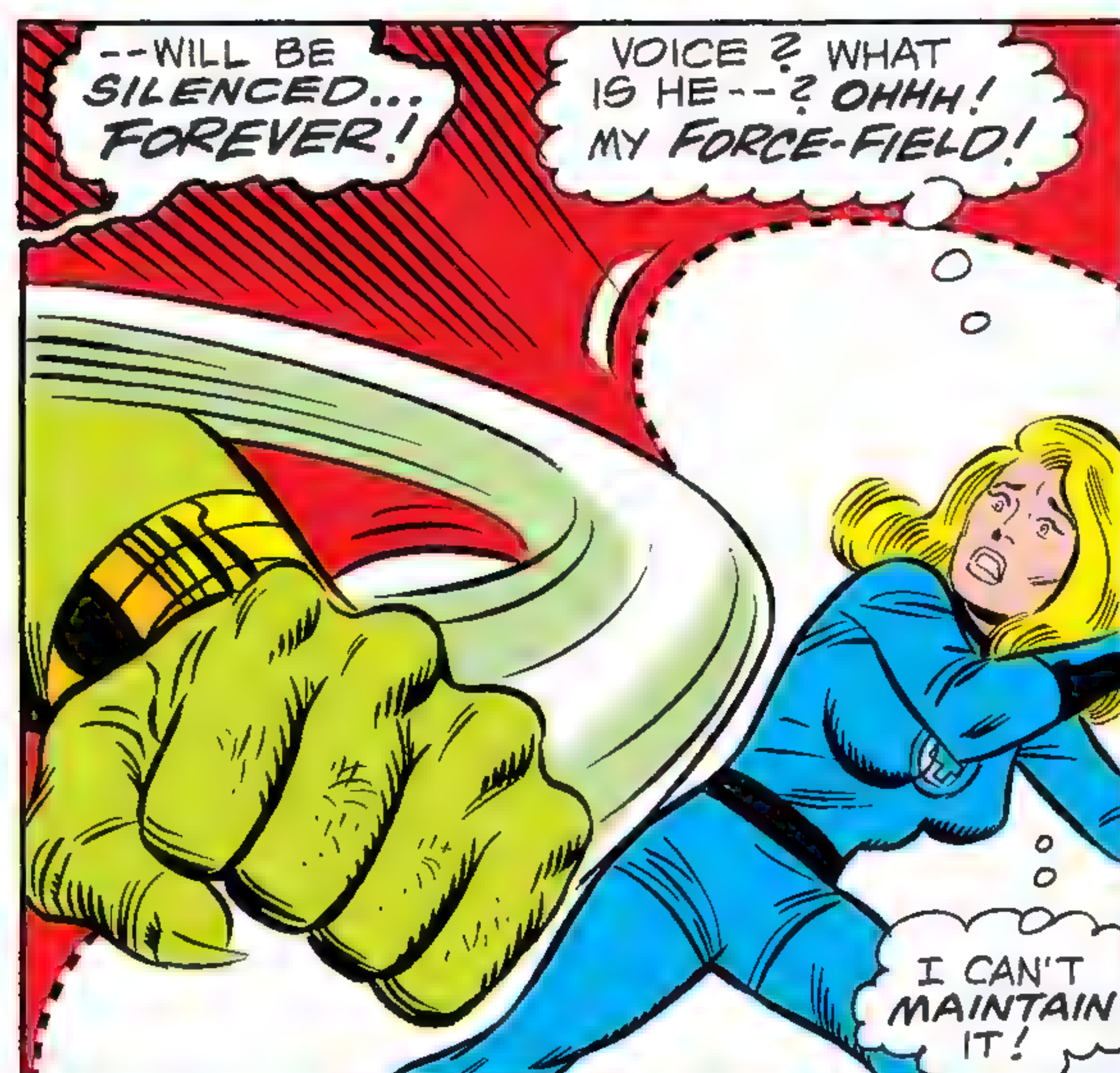
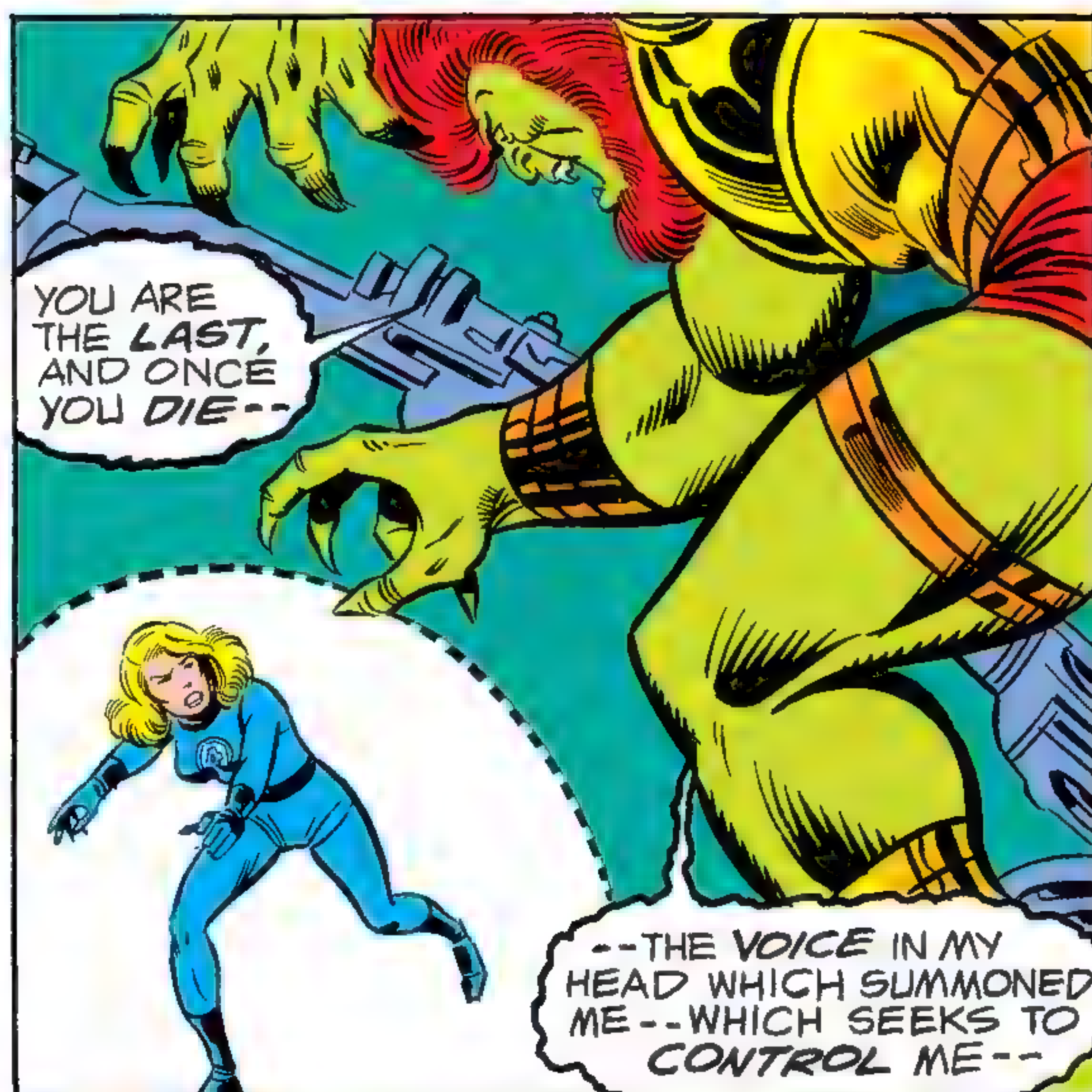


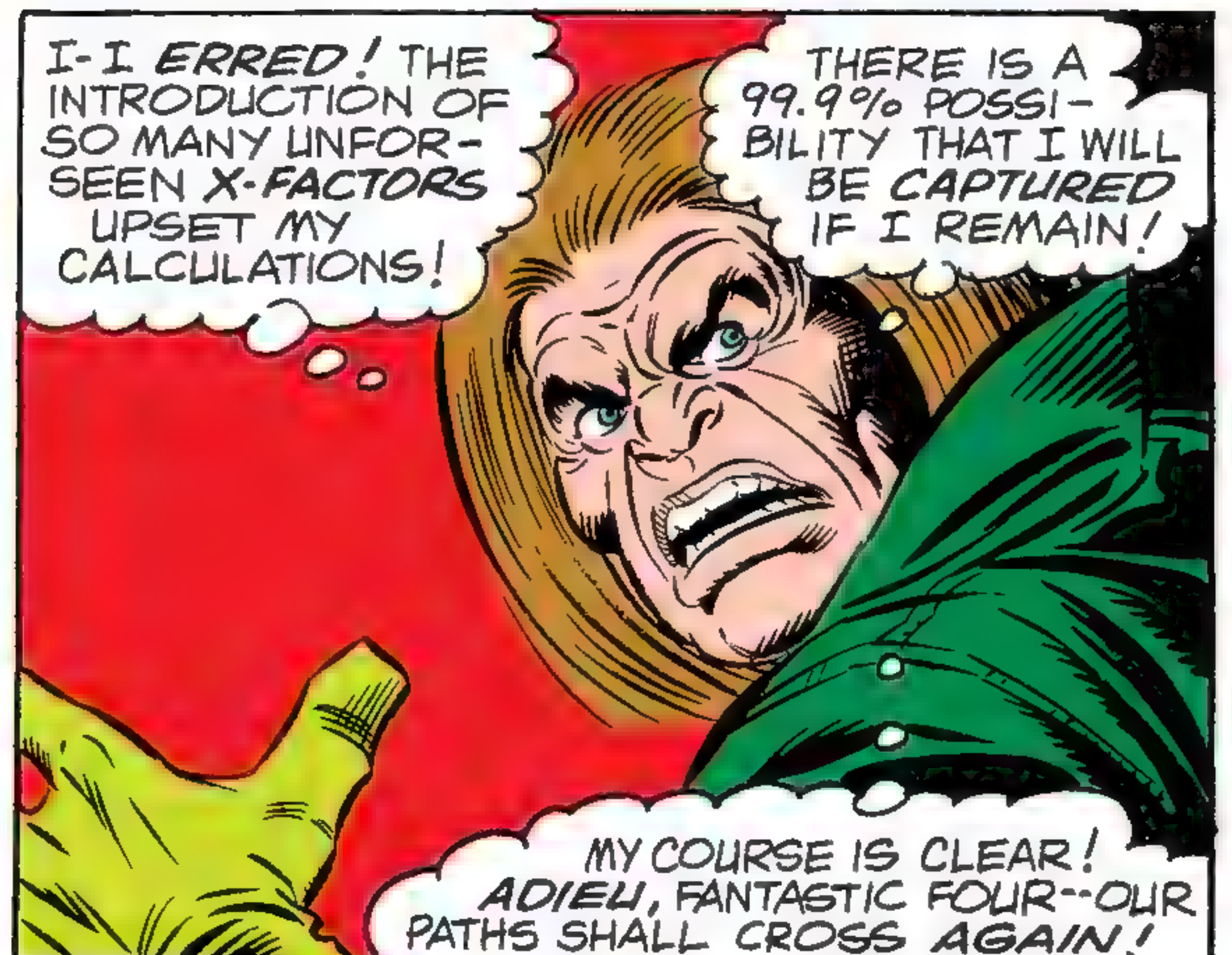
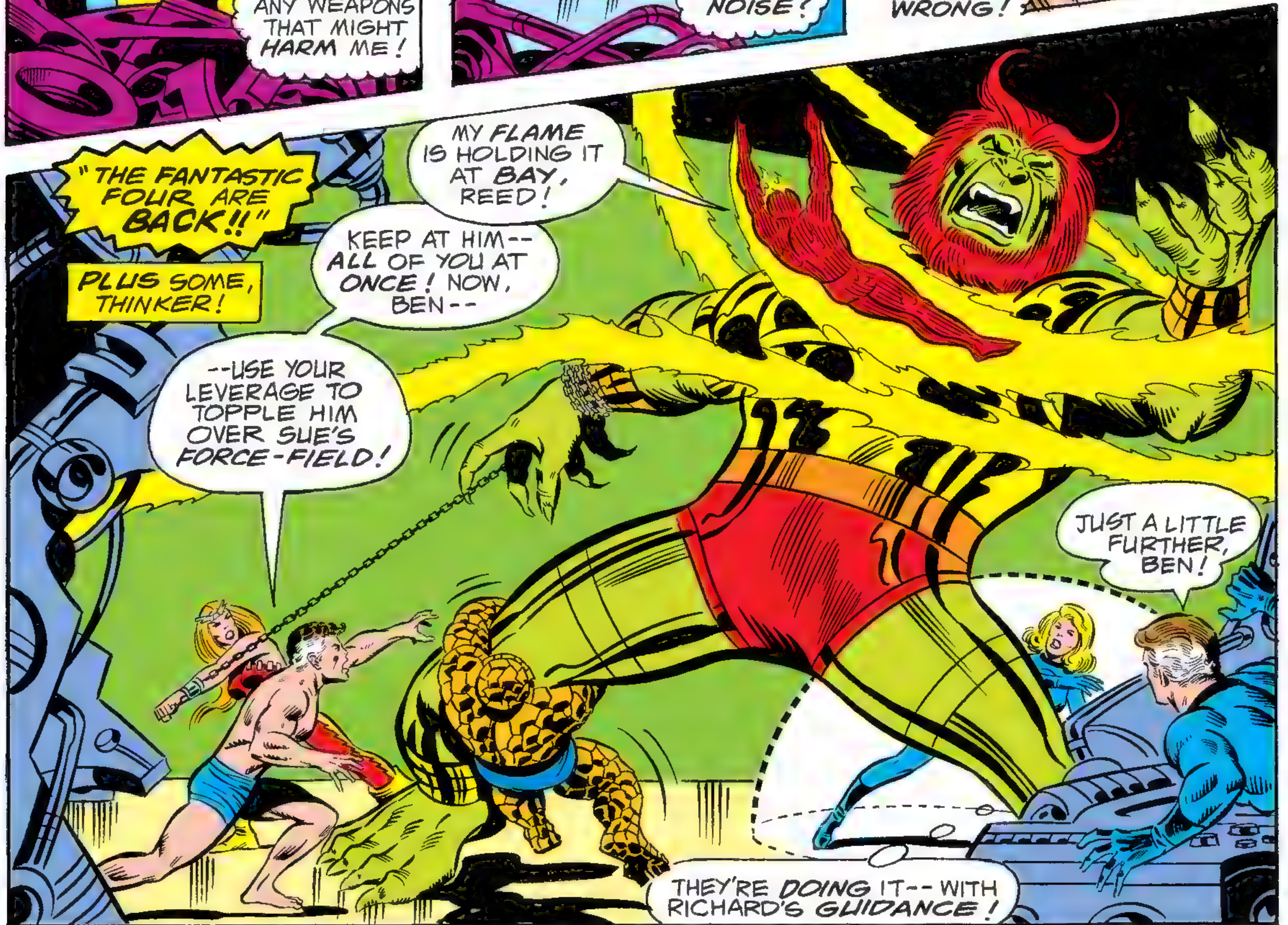
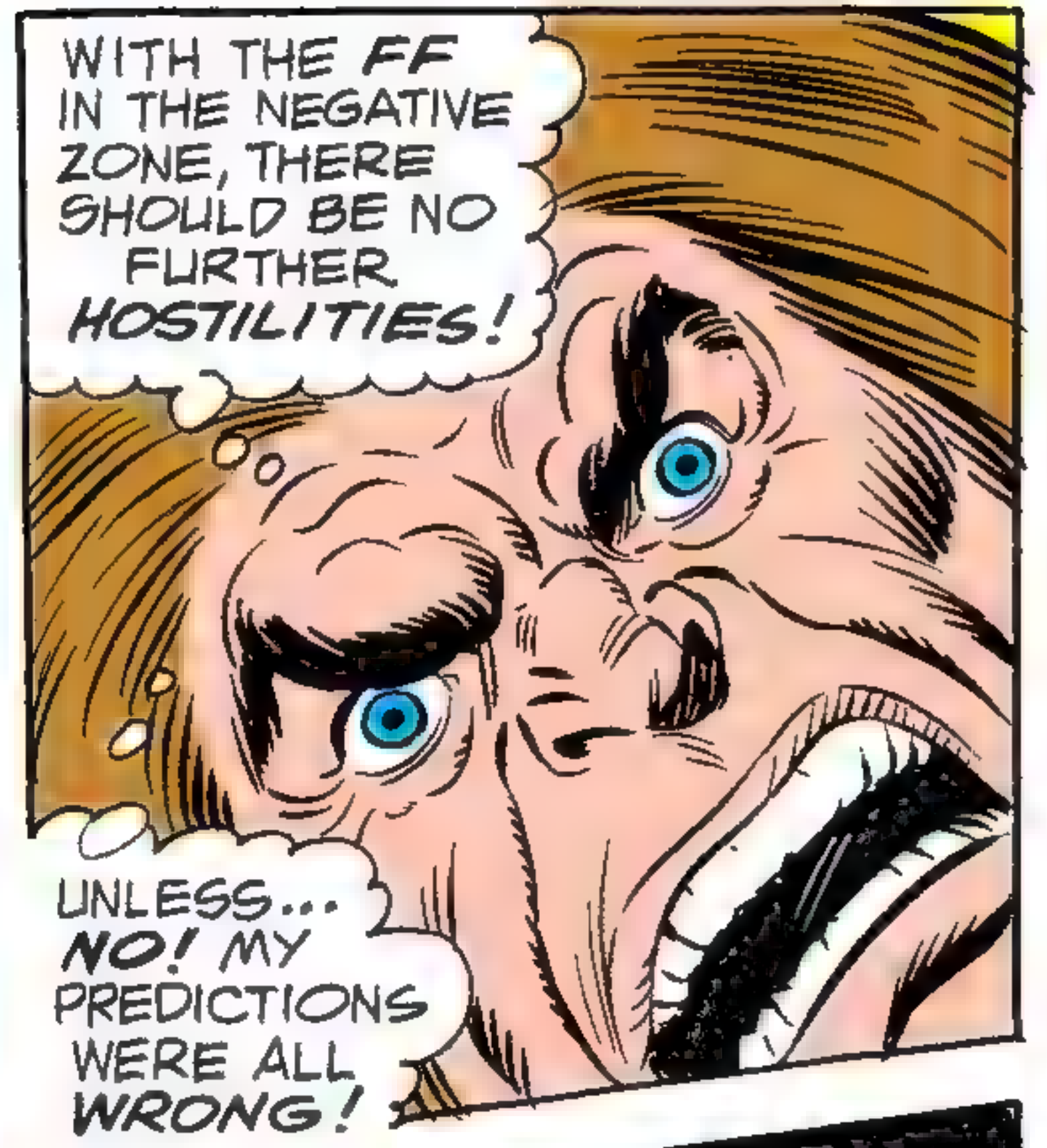
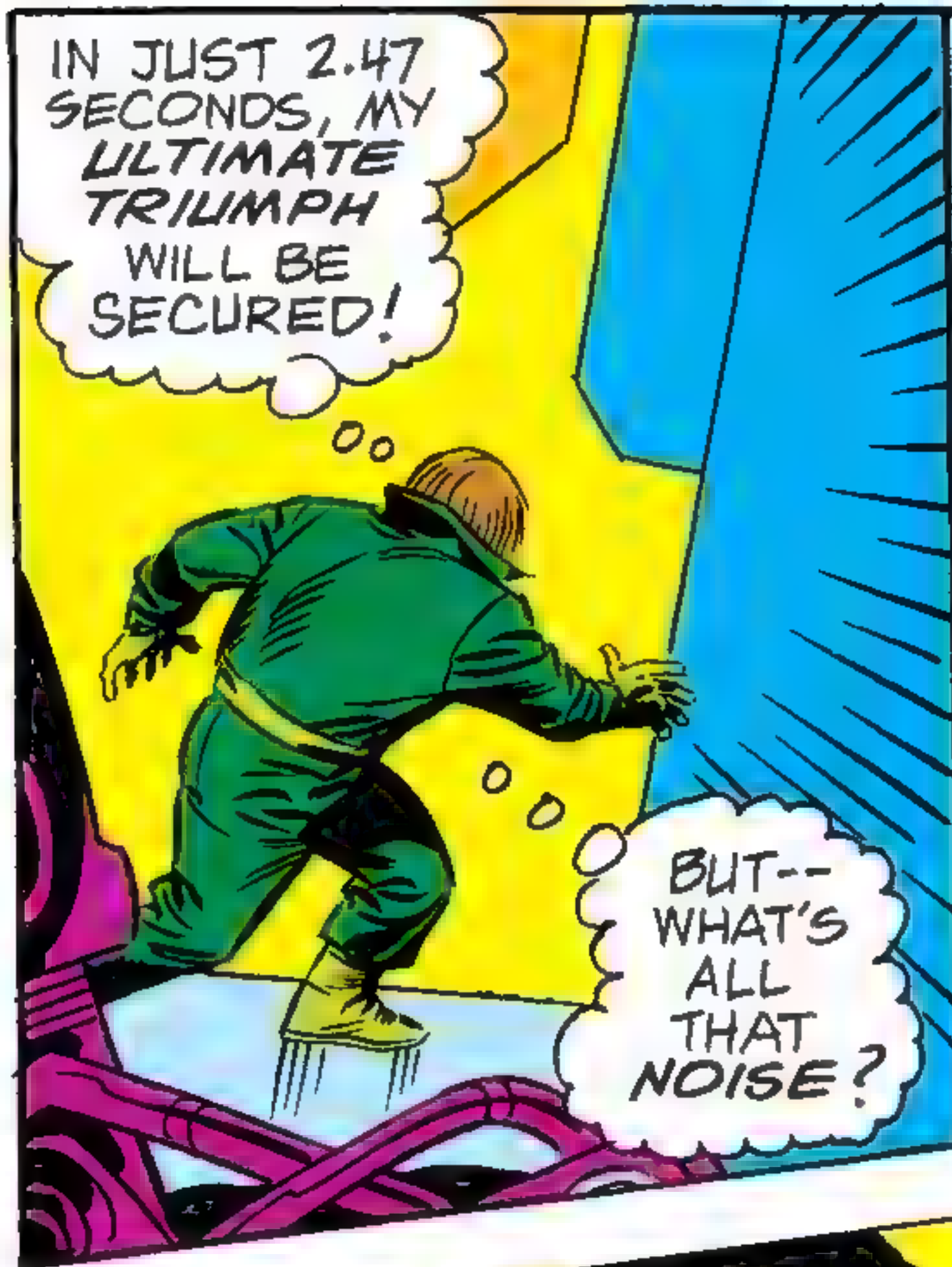
I AM
FREE,
SISTER!

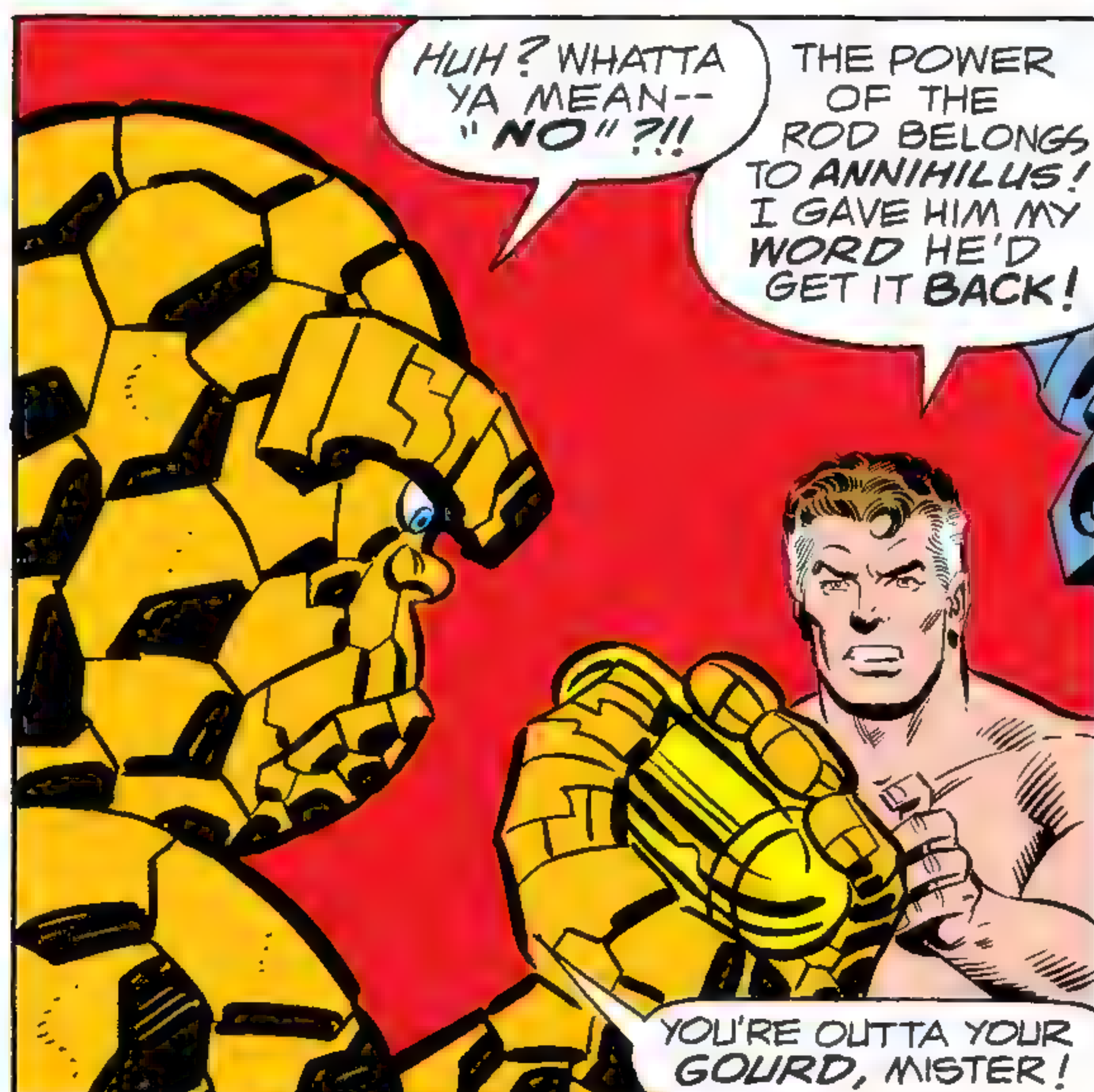
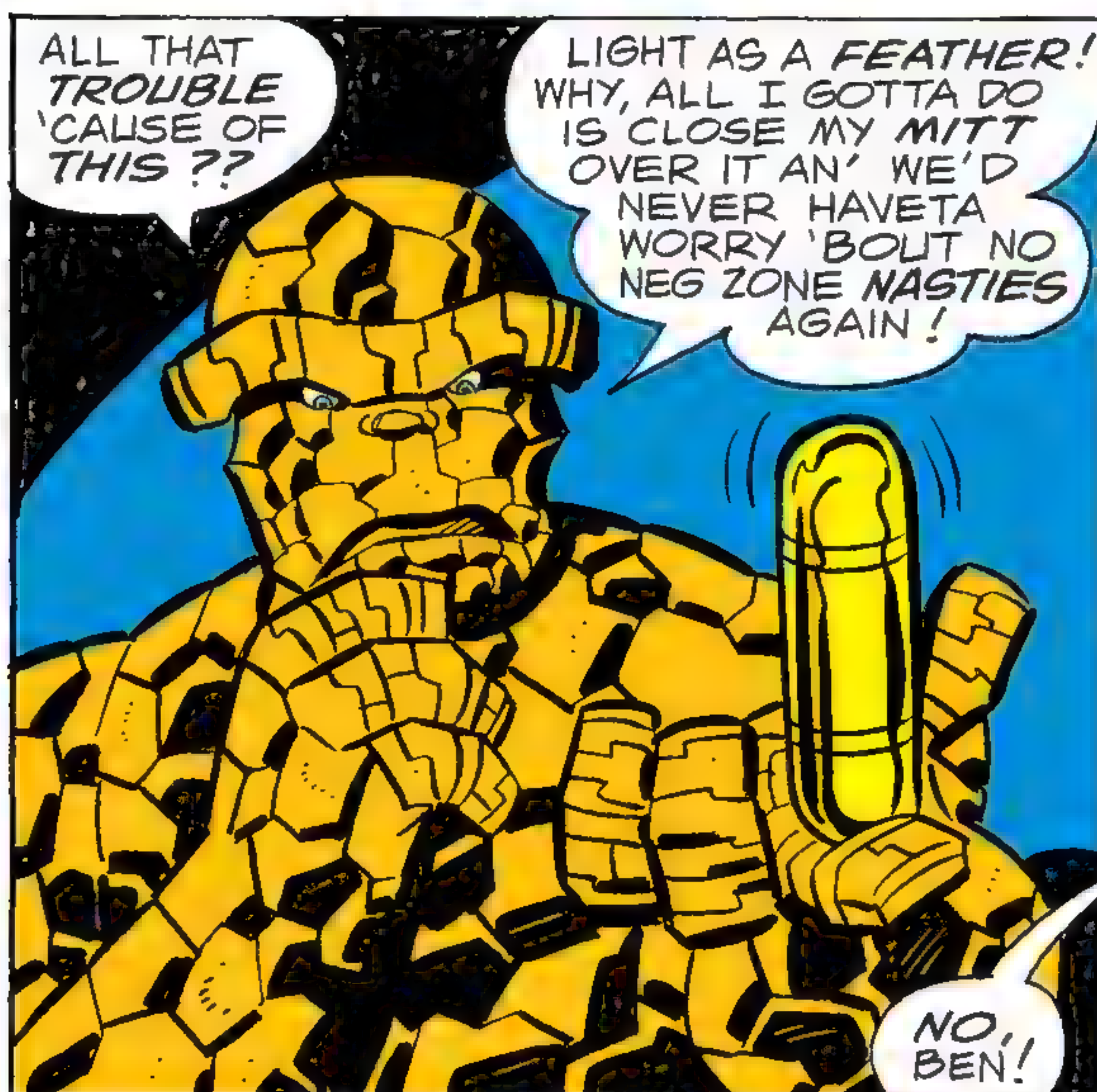
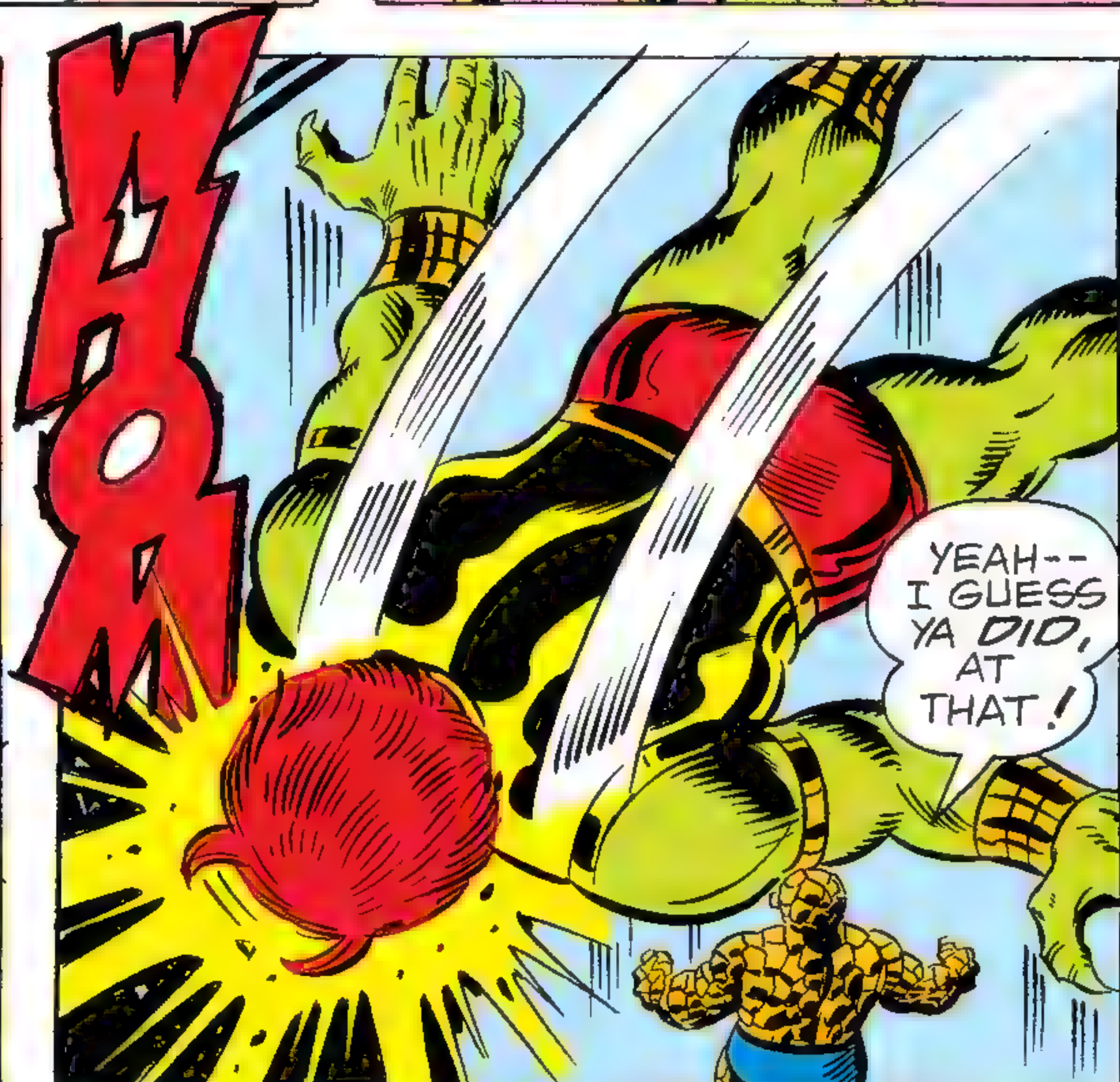
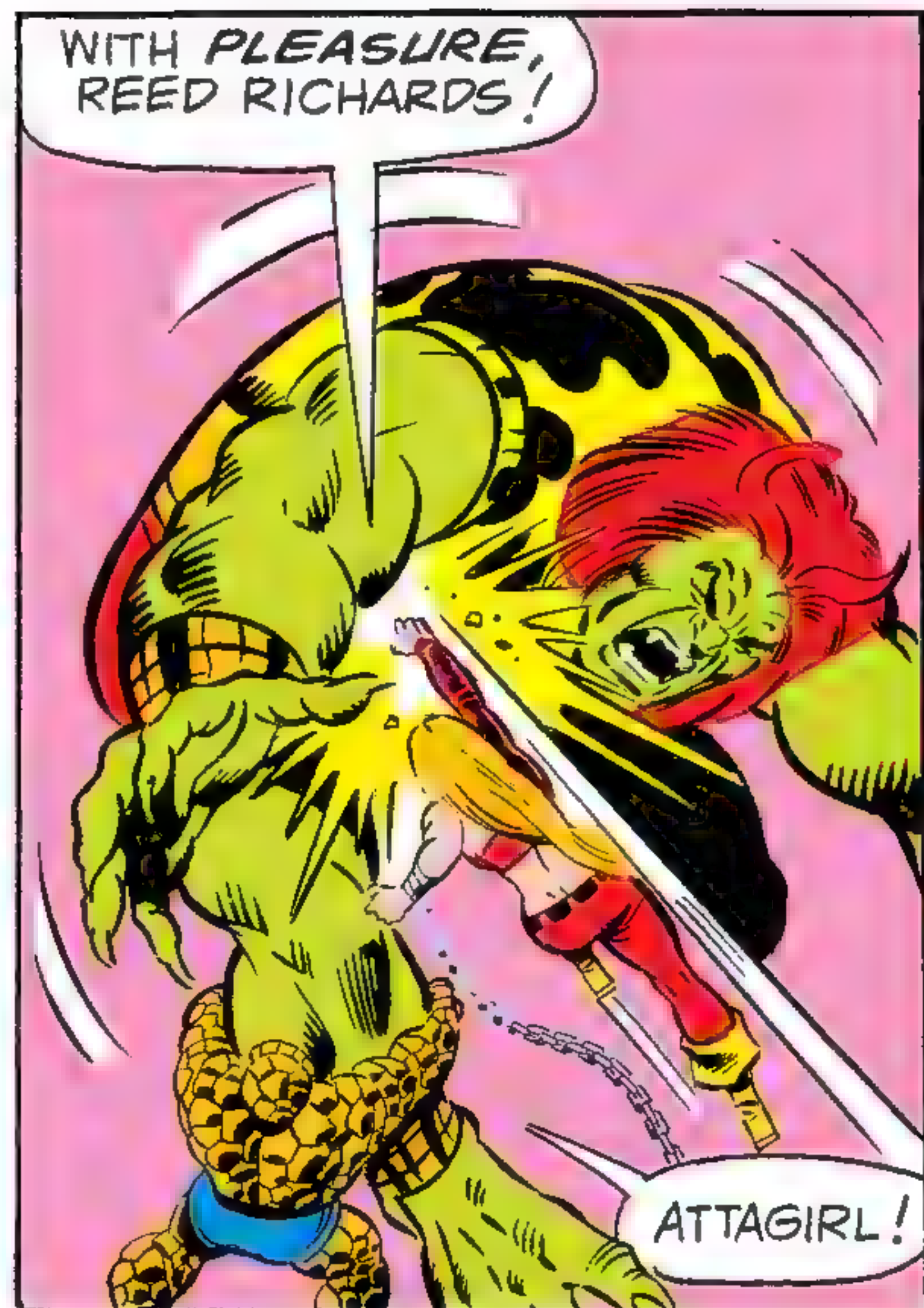
ONLY MY
PRIDE
HAS
SUFFERED!

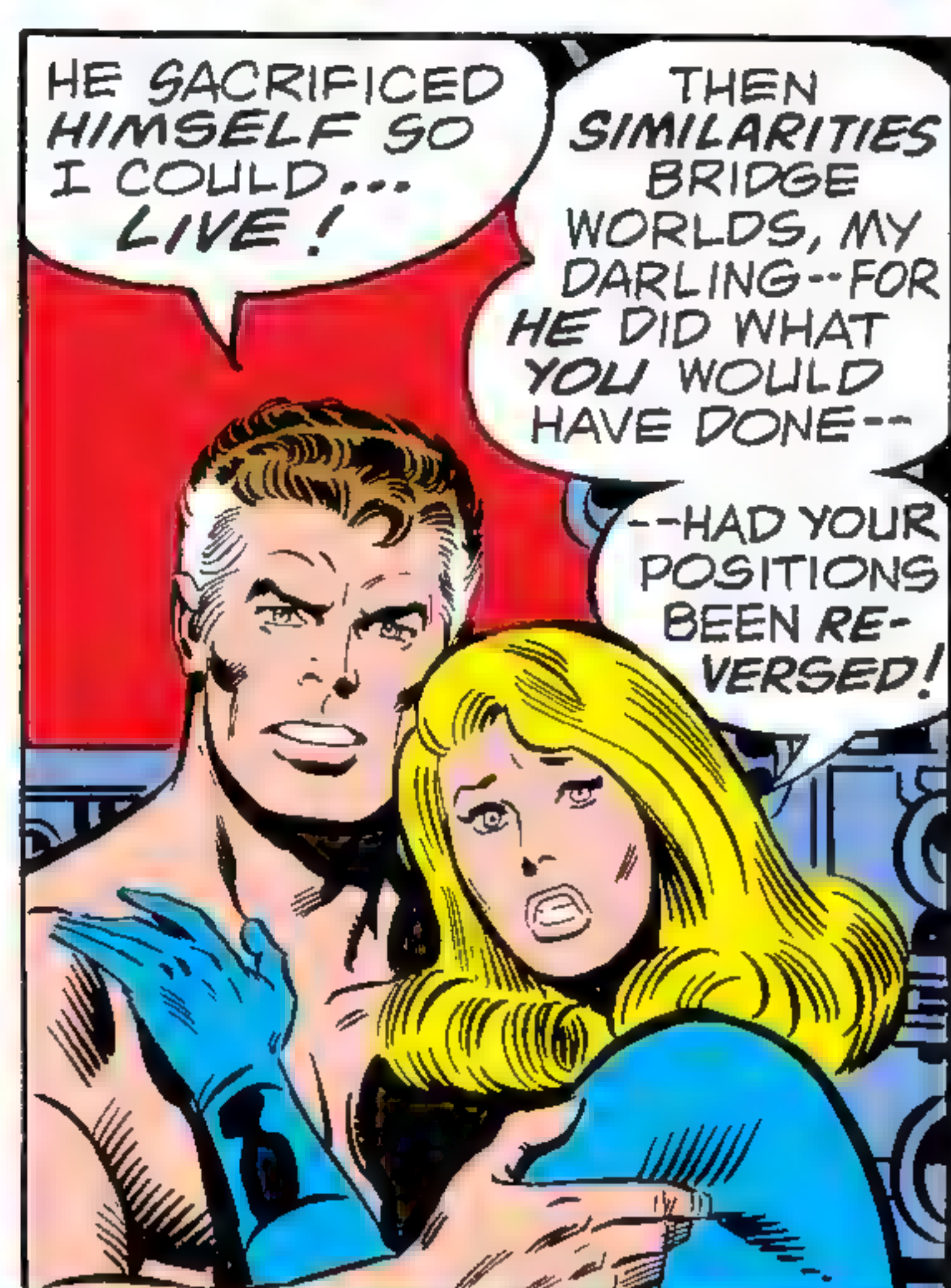
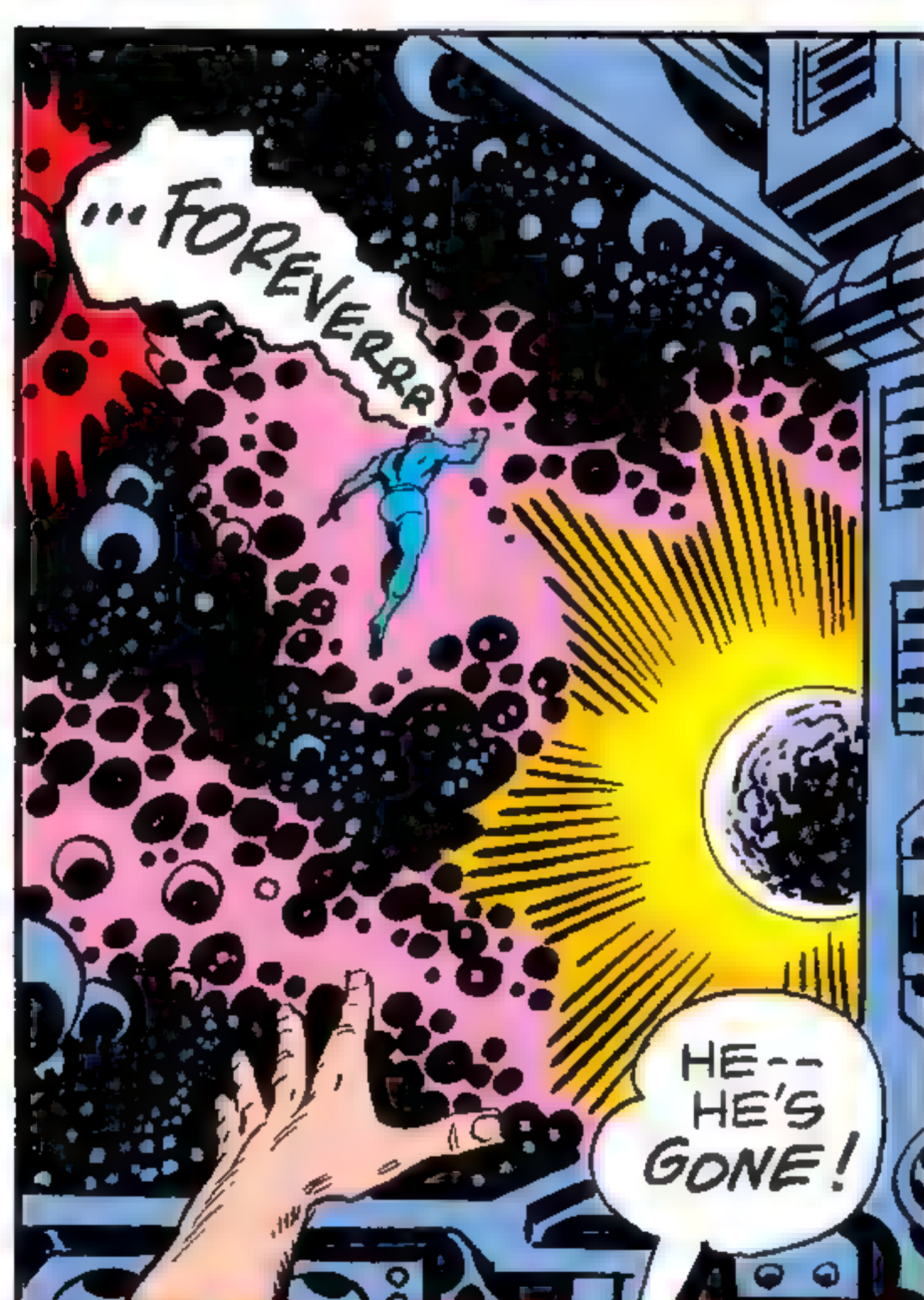
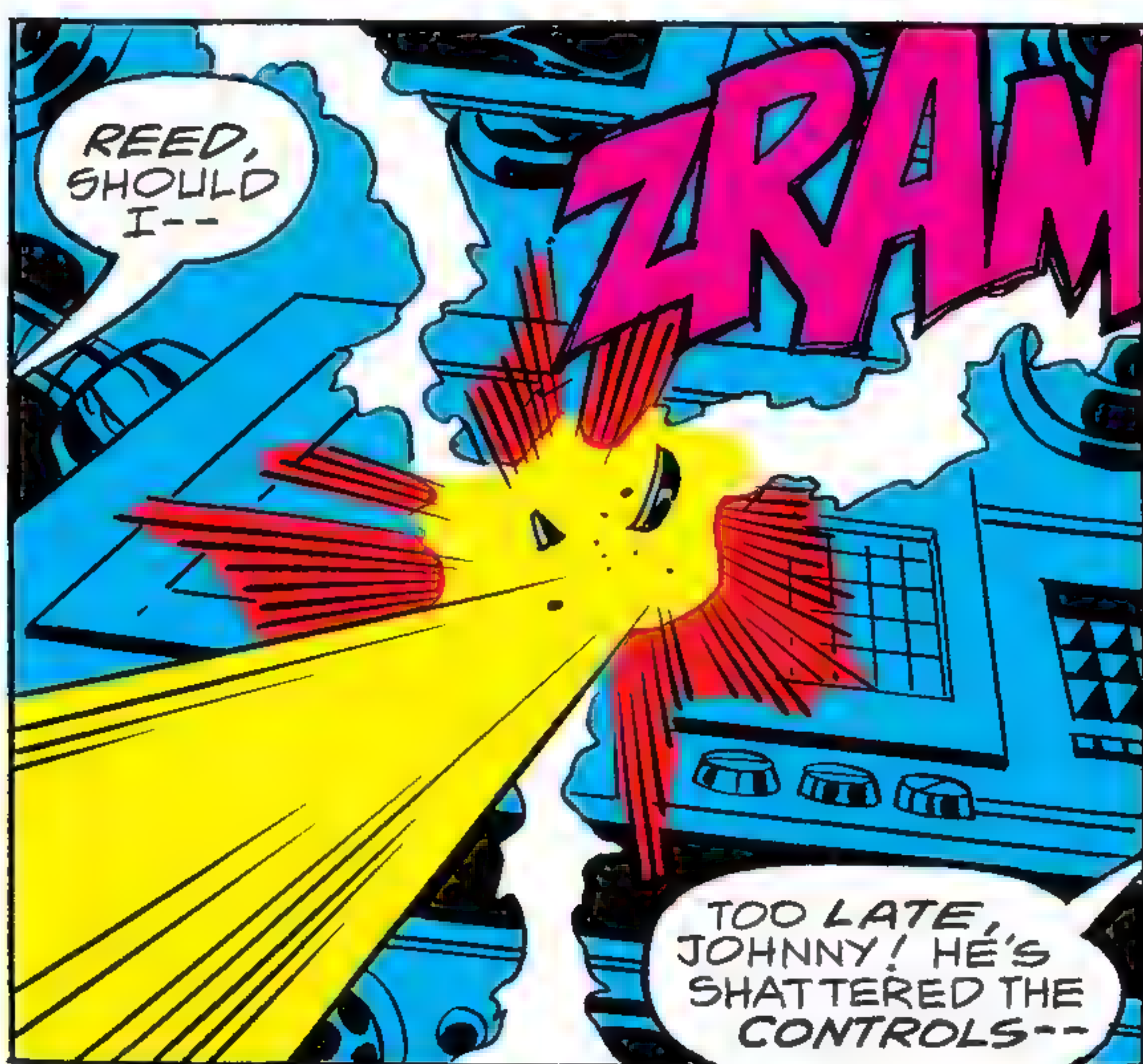
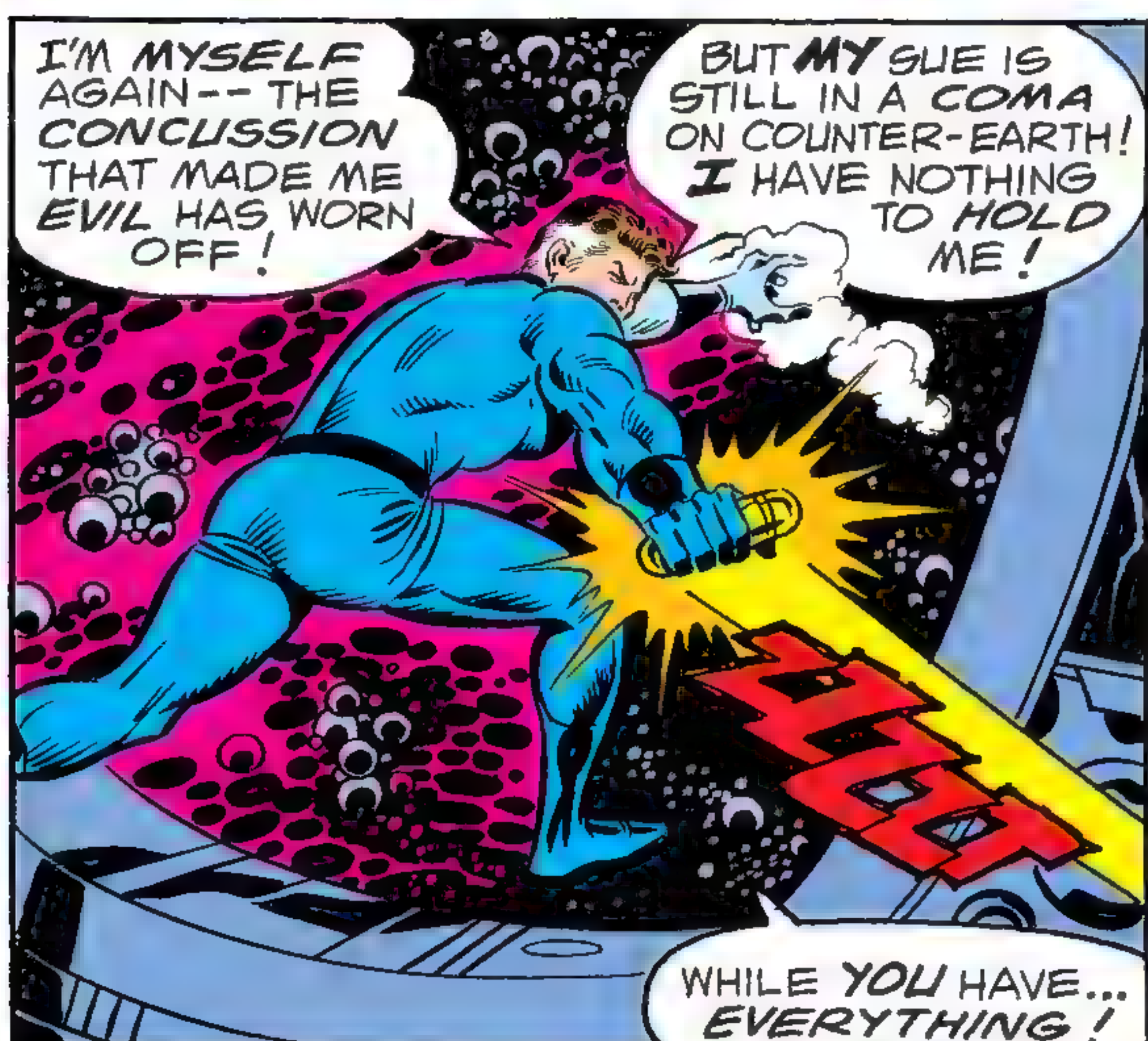
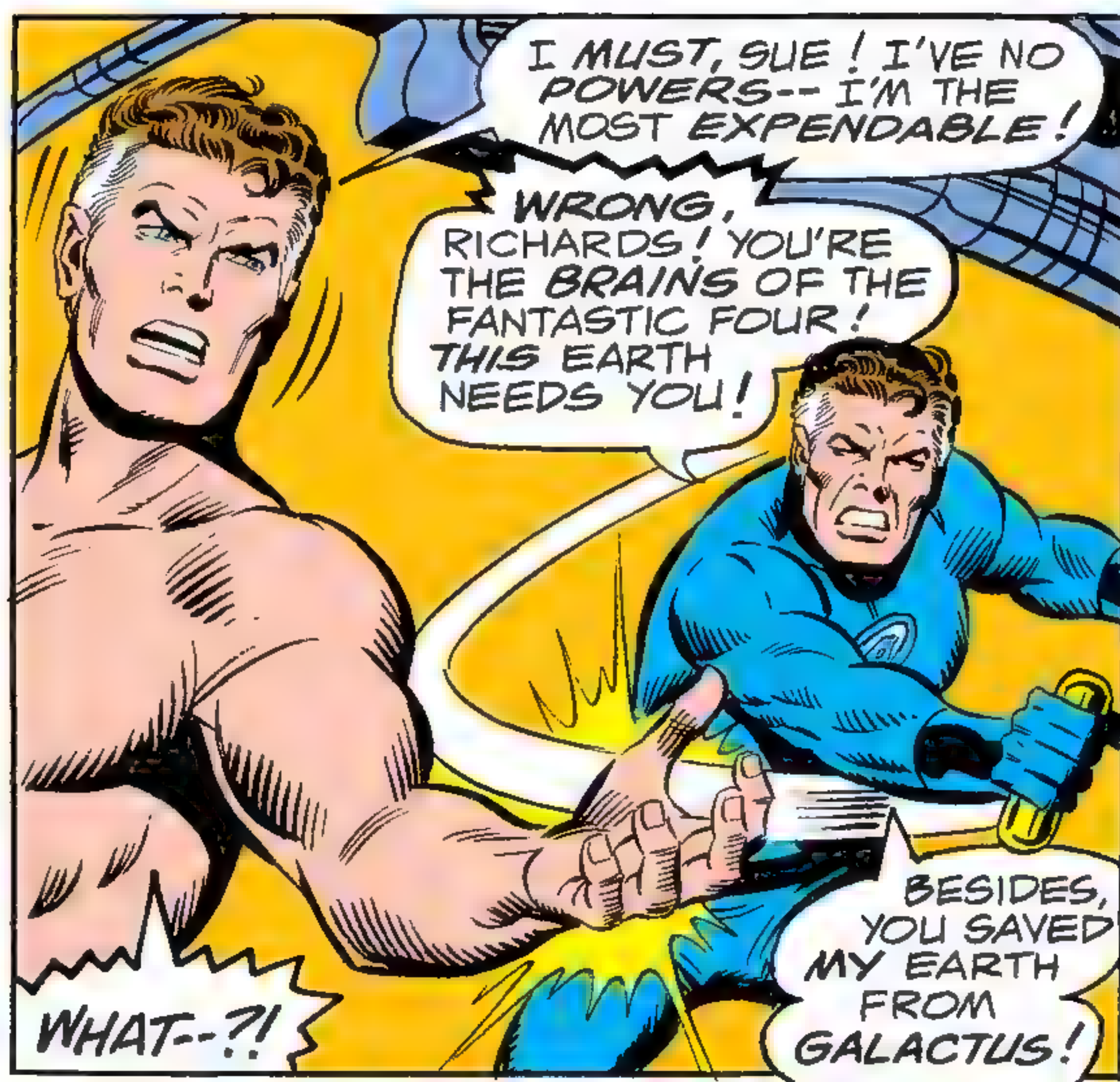
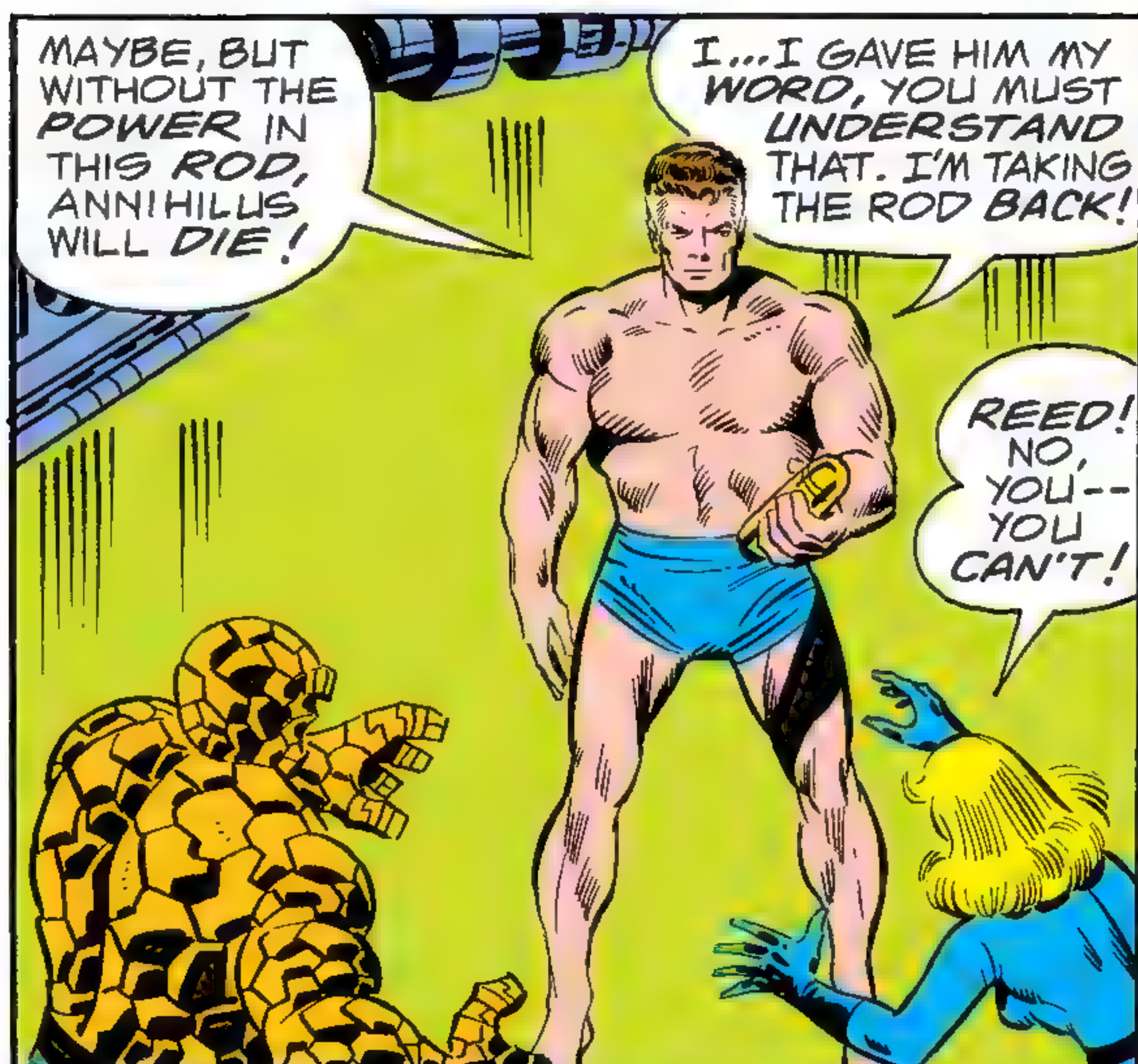












NEXT ISSUE: AT THE MERCY OF... **THE ELIMINATOR!** BE HERE!

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

30¢
©

184
JULY
02462

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]

THE BATTLE IS
OVER, HAPLESS FOOLS!
NOW YOU ARE AT THE
MERCY OF THE
ELIMINATOR!

AND THE ELIMINATOR
SHOWS **NO MERCY!!**



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

AFTERMATH: THE ELIMINATOR!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE DEPT: WELL, AS NEAR AS WE CAN FIGURE IT, THE BATTLE OF THE BAXTER BUILDING IS OVER; COUNTER-EARTH'S REED RICHARDS-- ALIAS THE BRUTE-- IS LOST SOMEWHERE IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE; AND THE MAD THINKER HAS DEPARTED FOR POINTS UNKNOWN...

... LEAVING THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS FOURSOME AND FRIENDS ALONE TO PICK UP THE PIECES.

THUNDRA, THE STRAIN HAS BEEN TOO MUCH FOR REED... HE'S FAINTING!

CALM DOWN, BEN! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO!

LISTEN TO TIGRA, BUDDY! THE NEG ZONE PORTAL IS SEALED!

YEAH, I... I GUESS YER RIGHT, HOTSHOT.

IT'S FINALLY FINISHED, AIN'T IT?

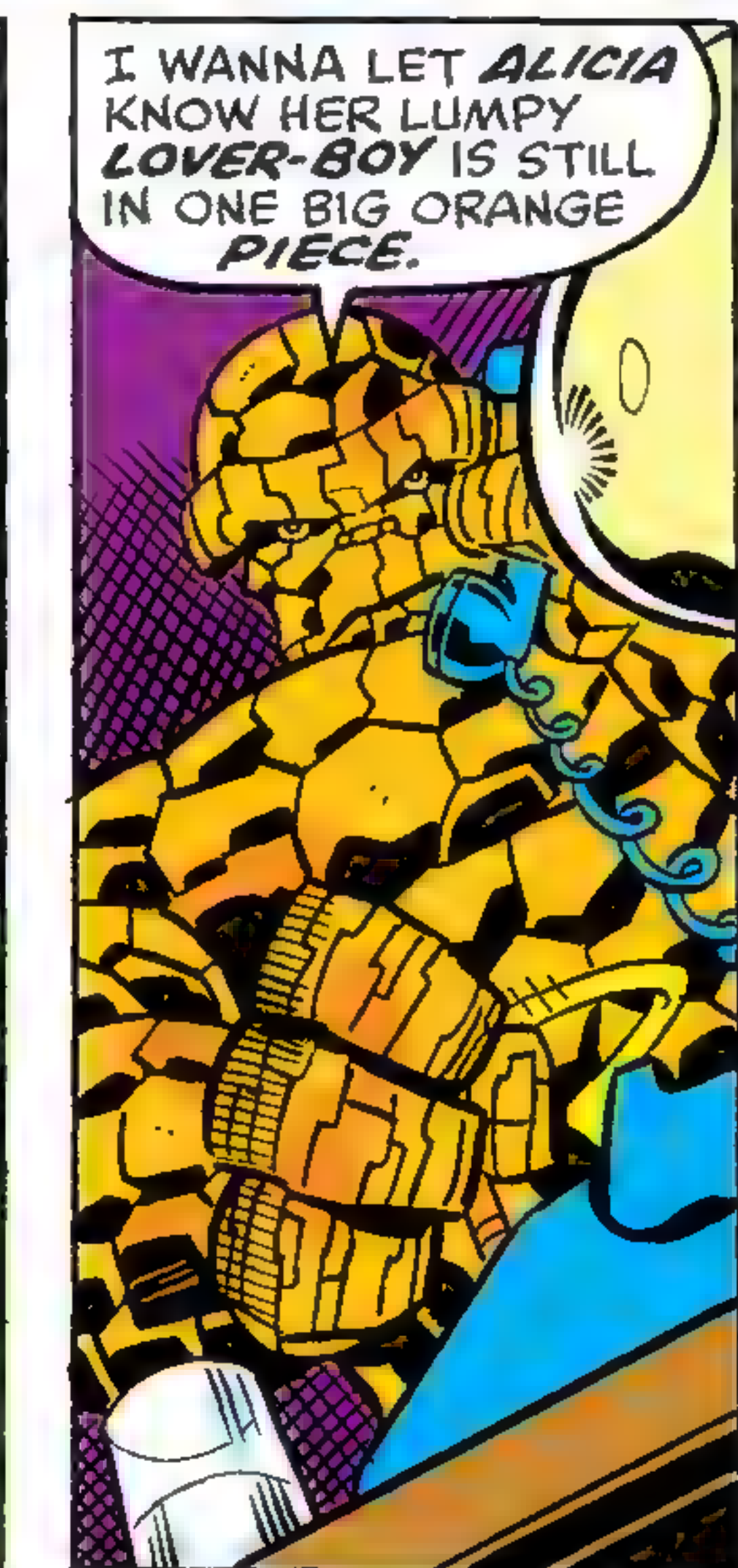
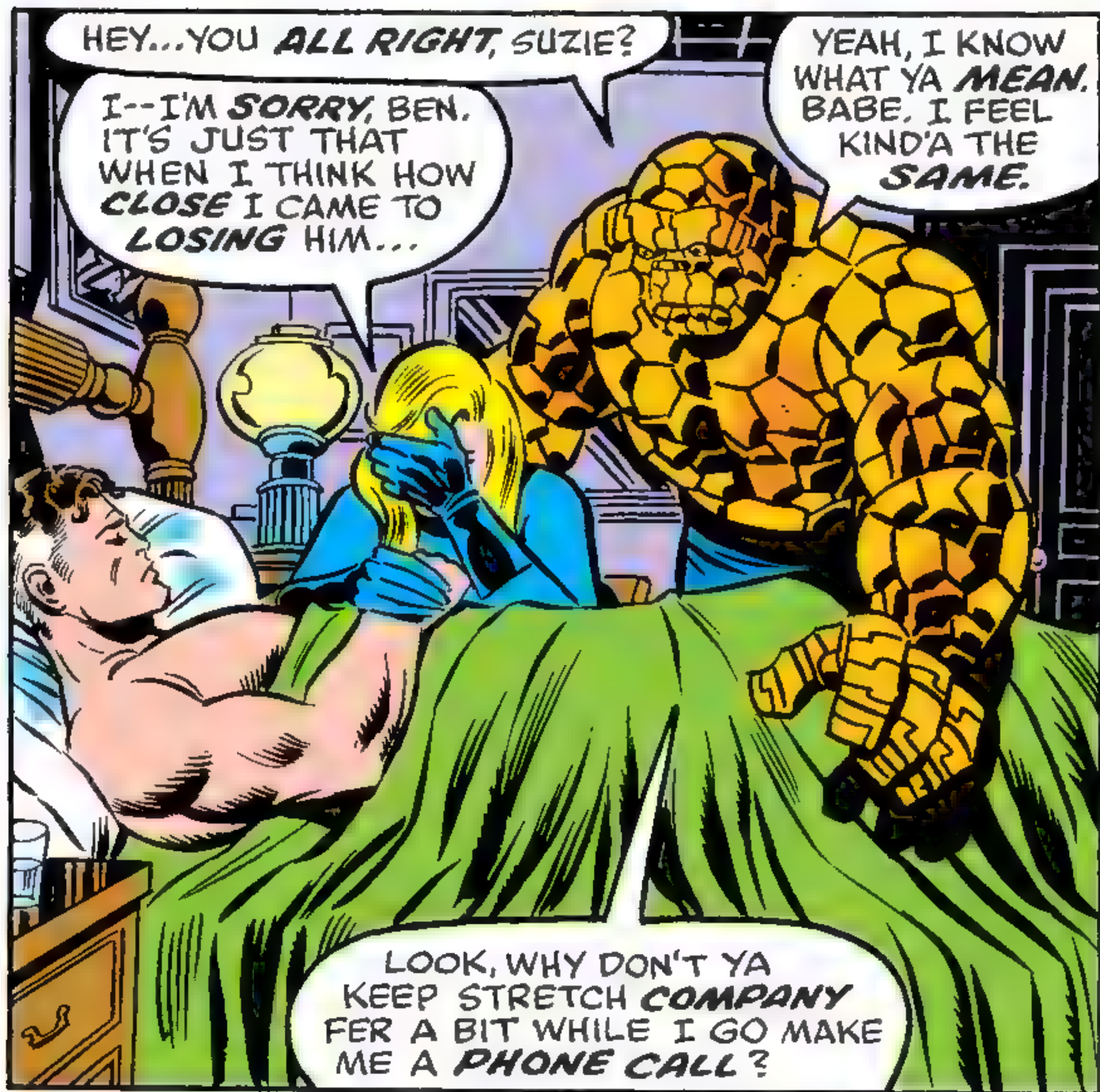
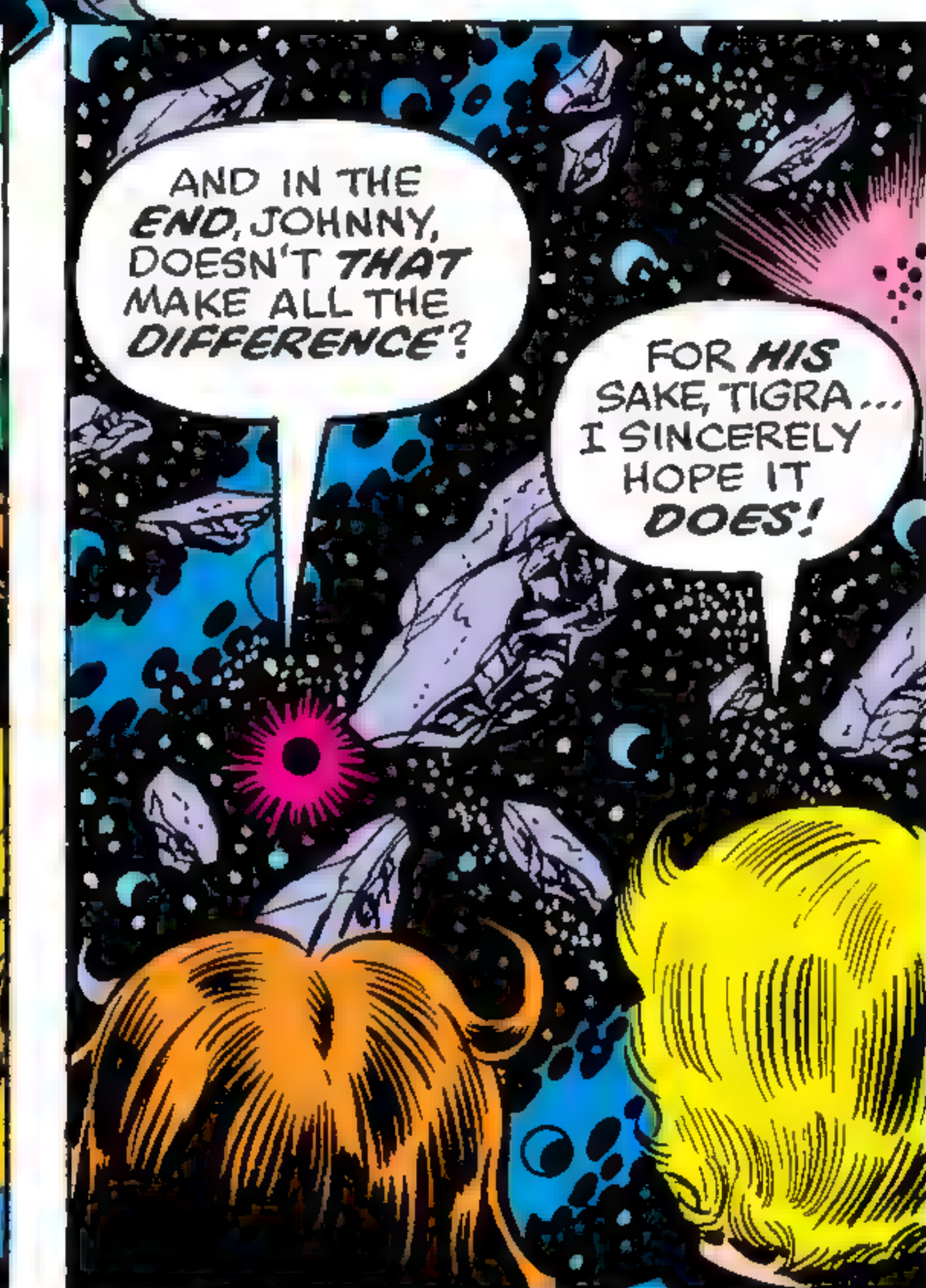
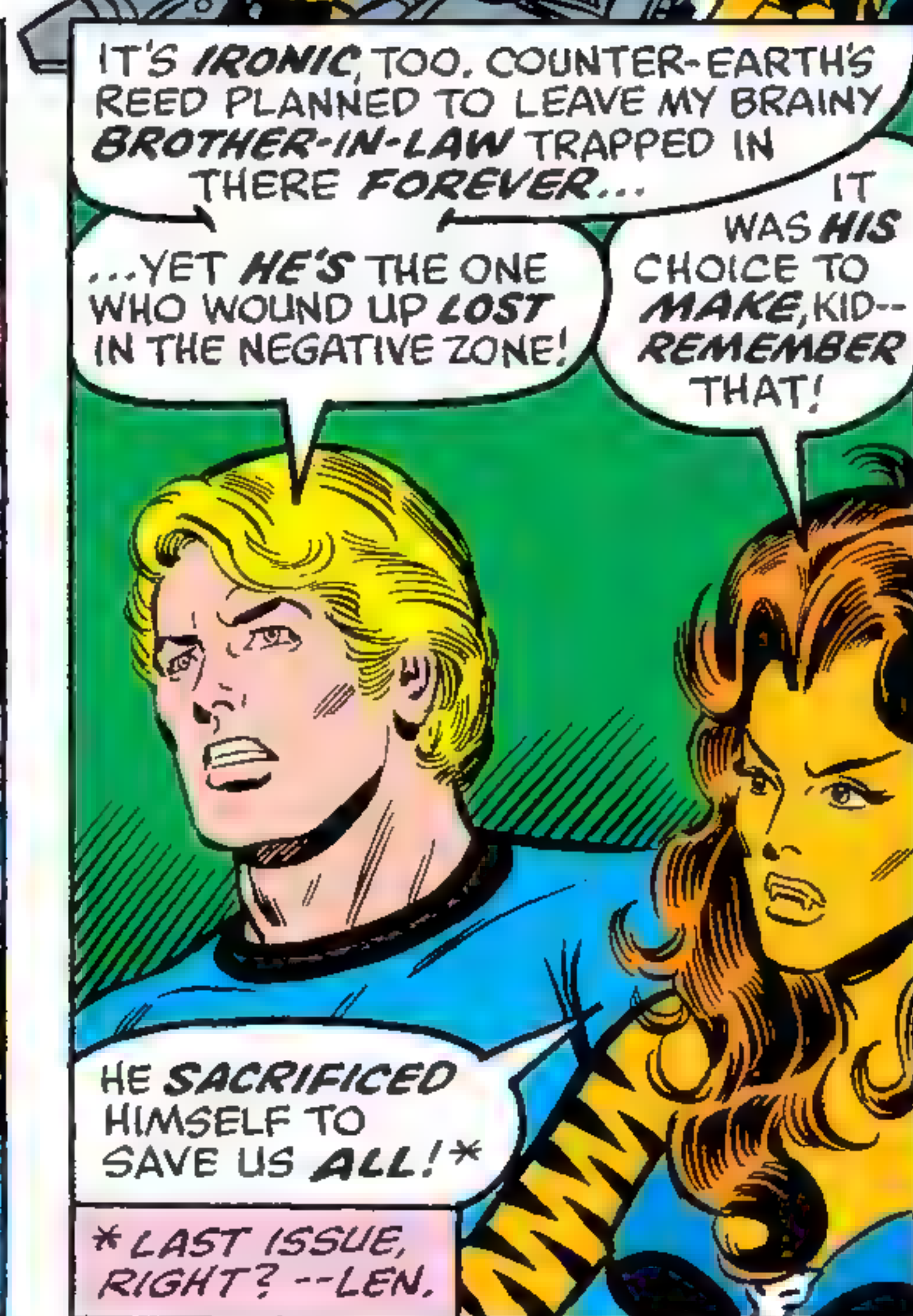
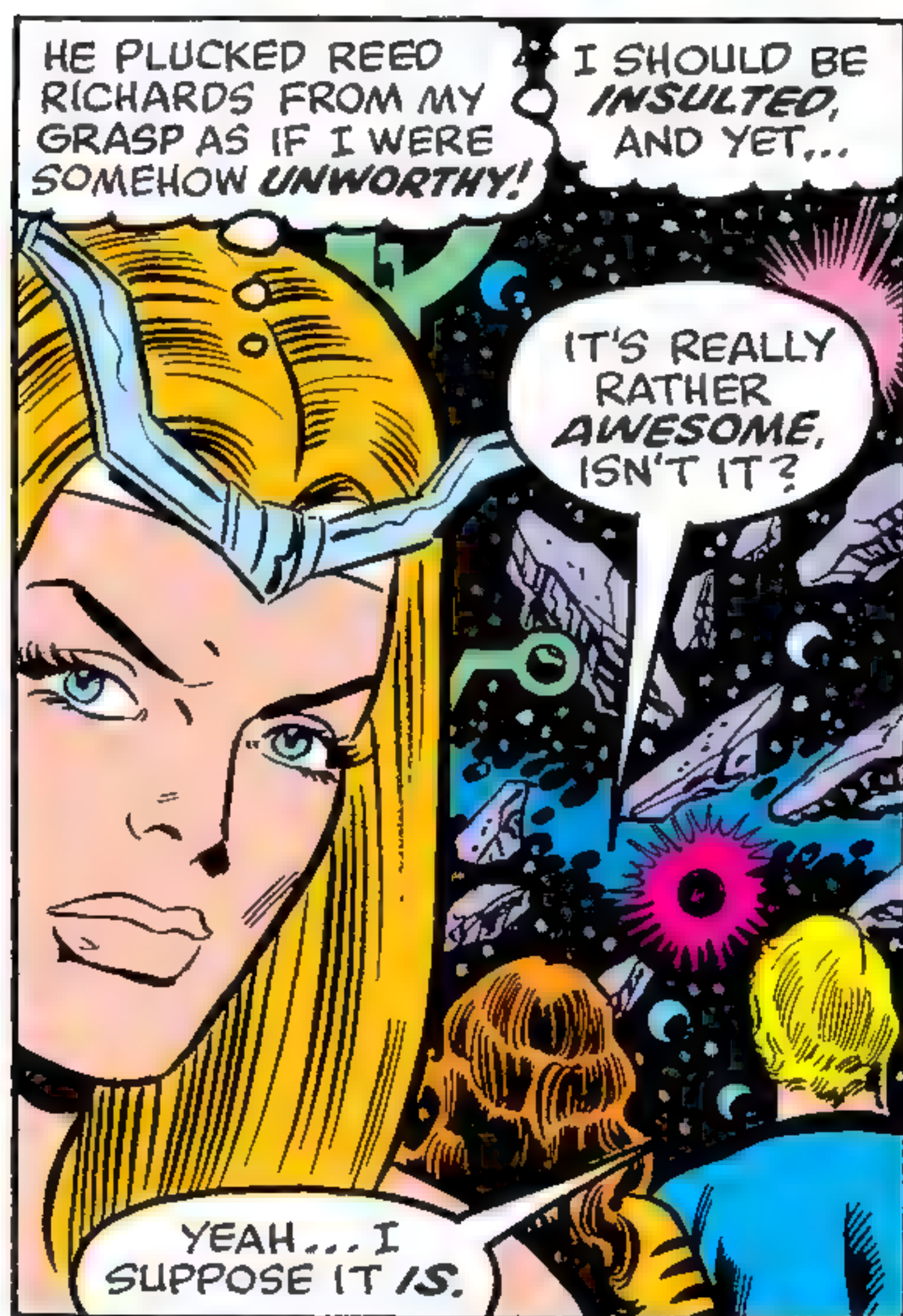
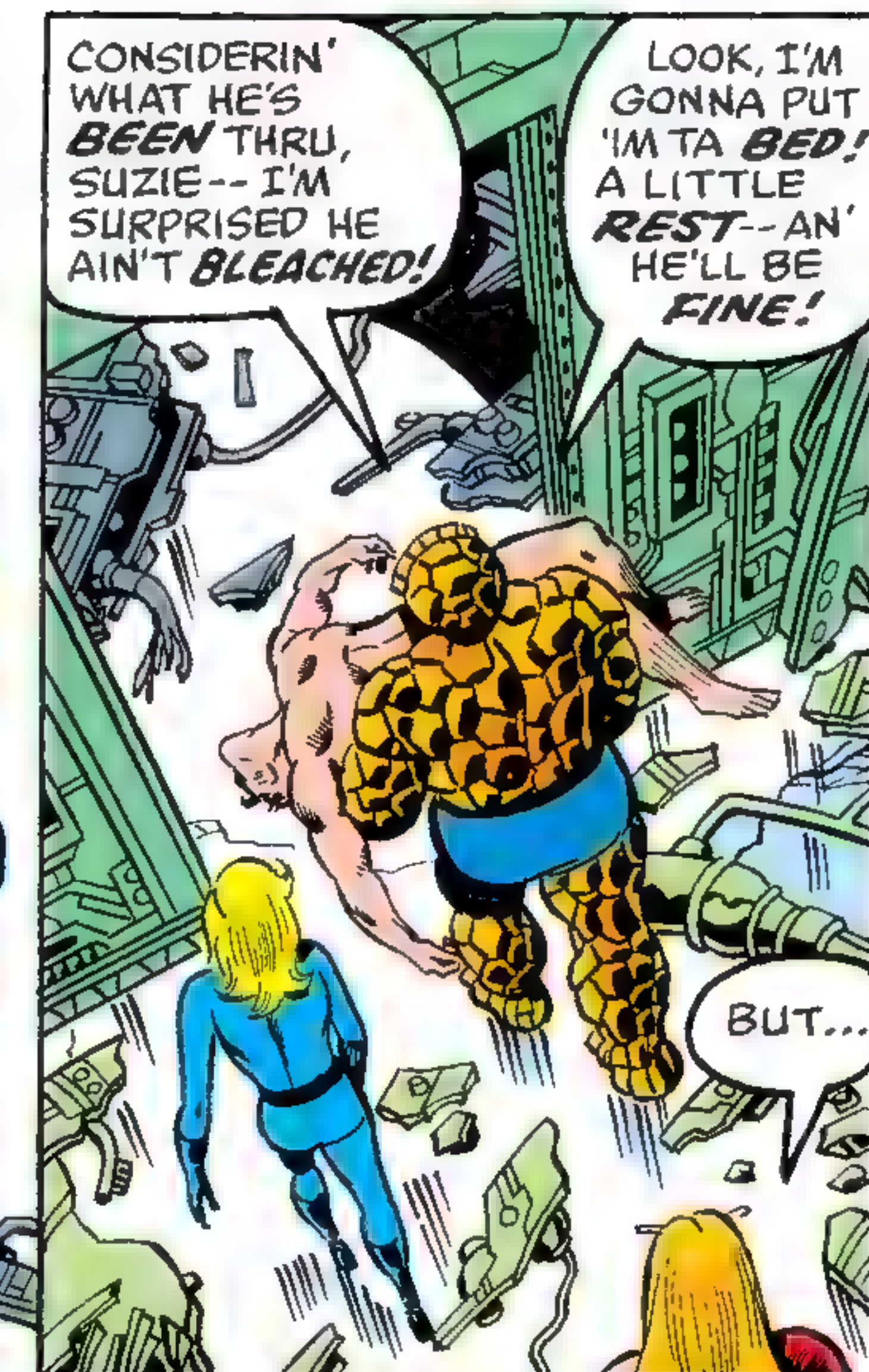
BUT FOR THESE STALWARTS, IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING...

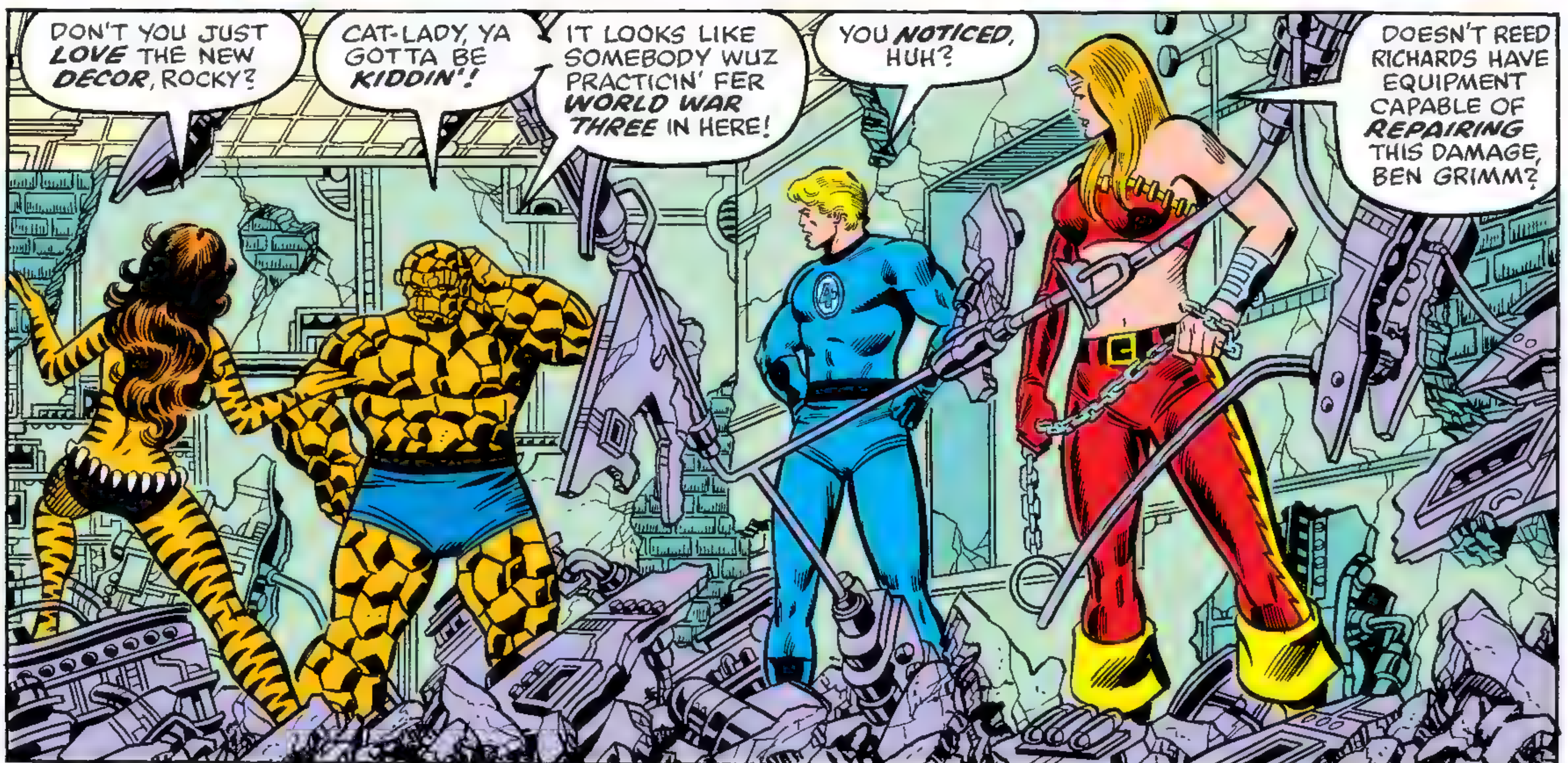
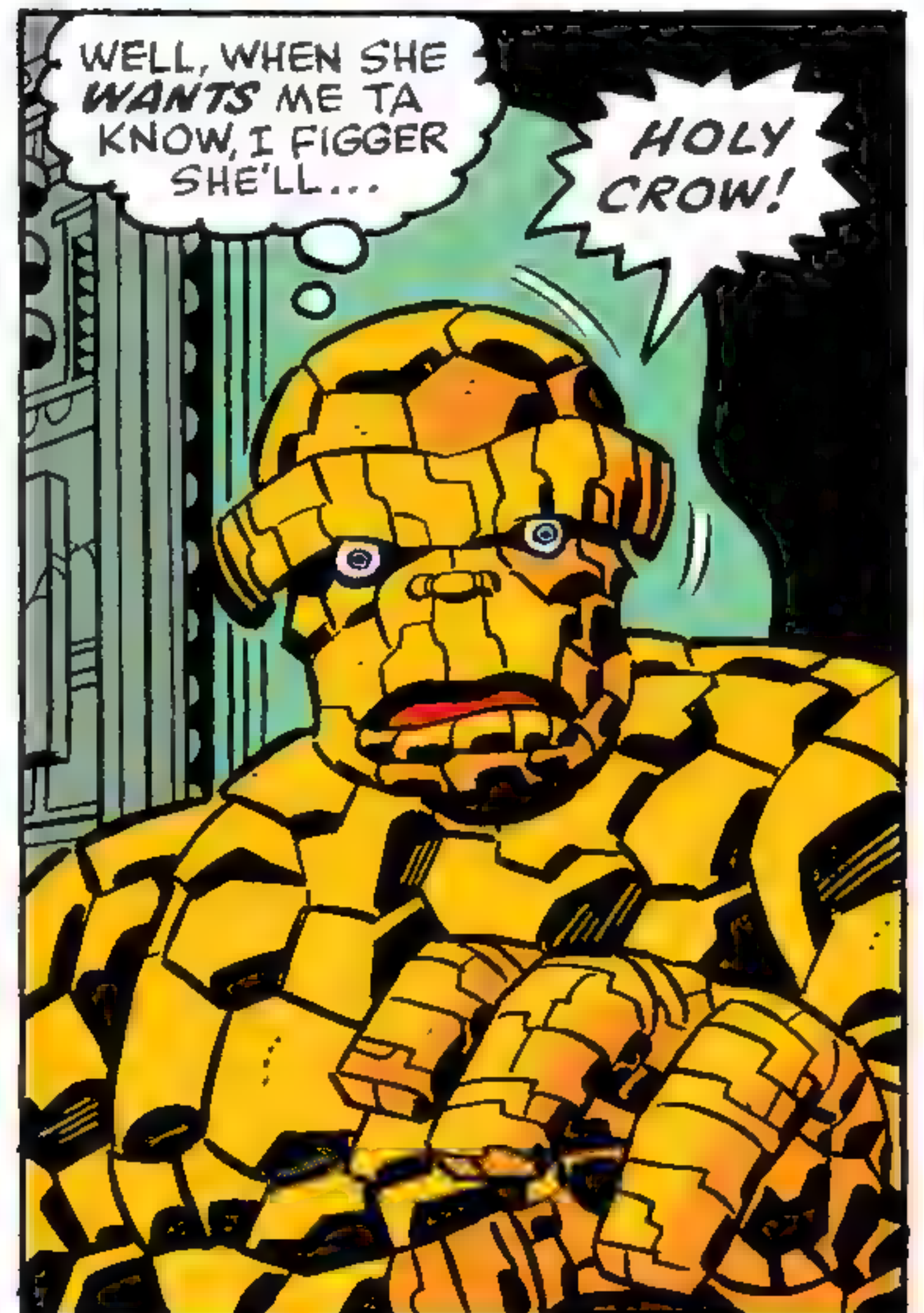
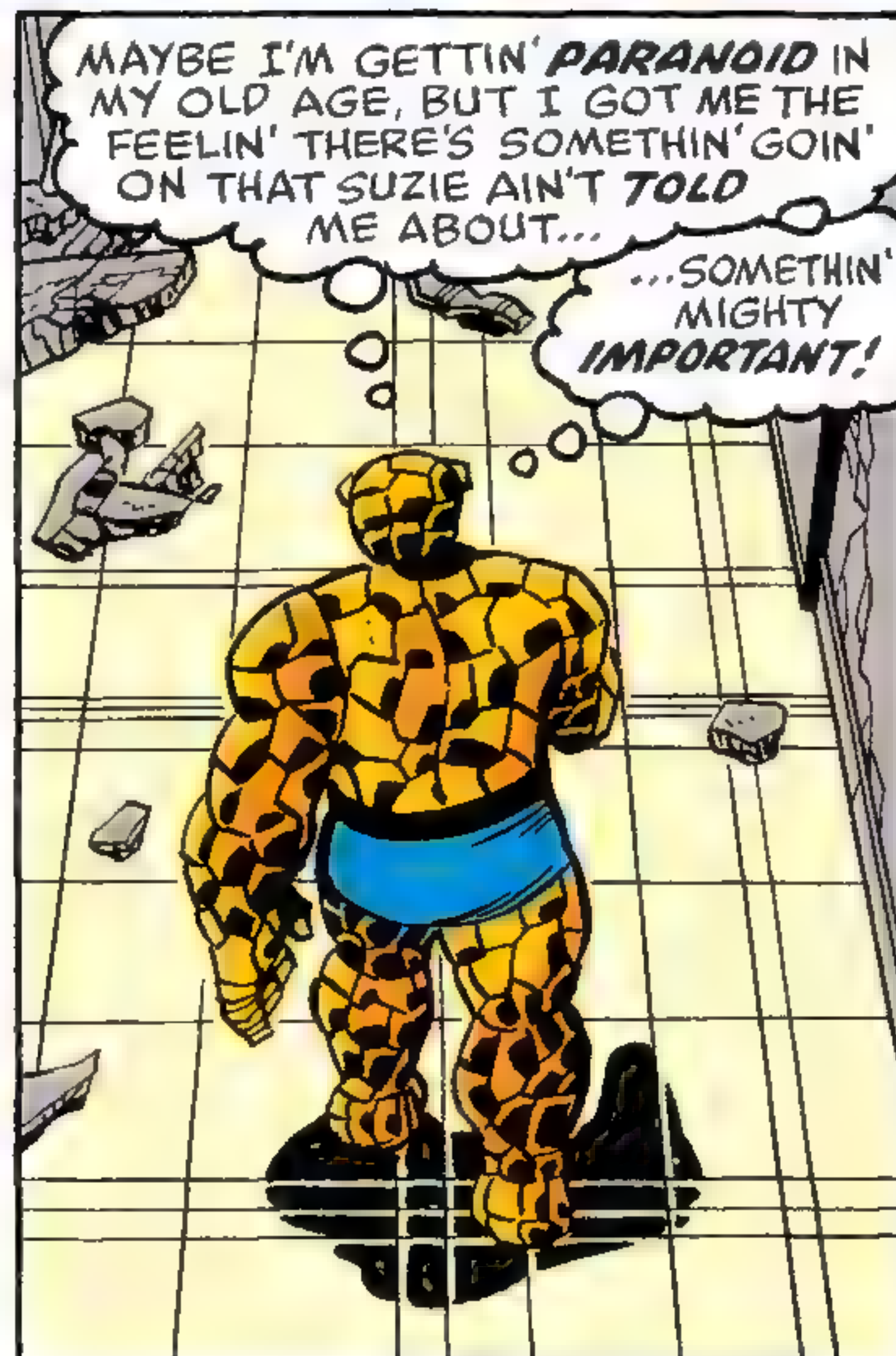
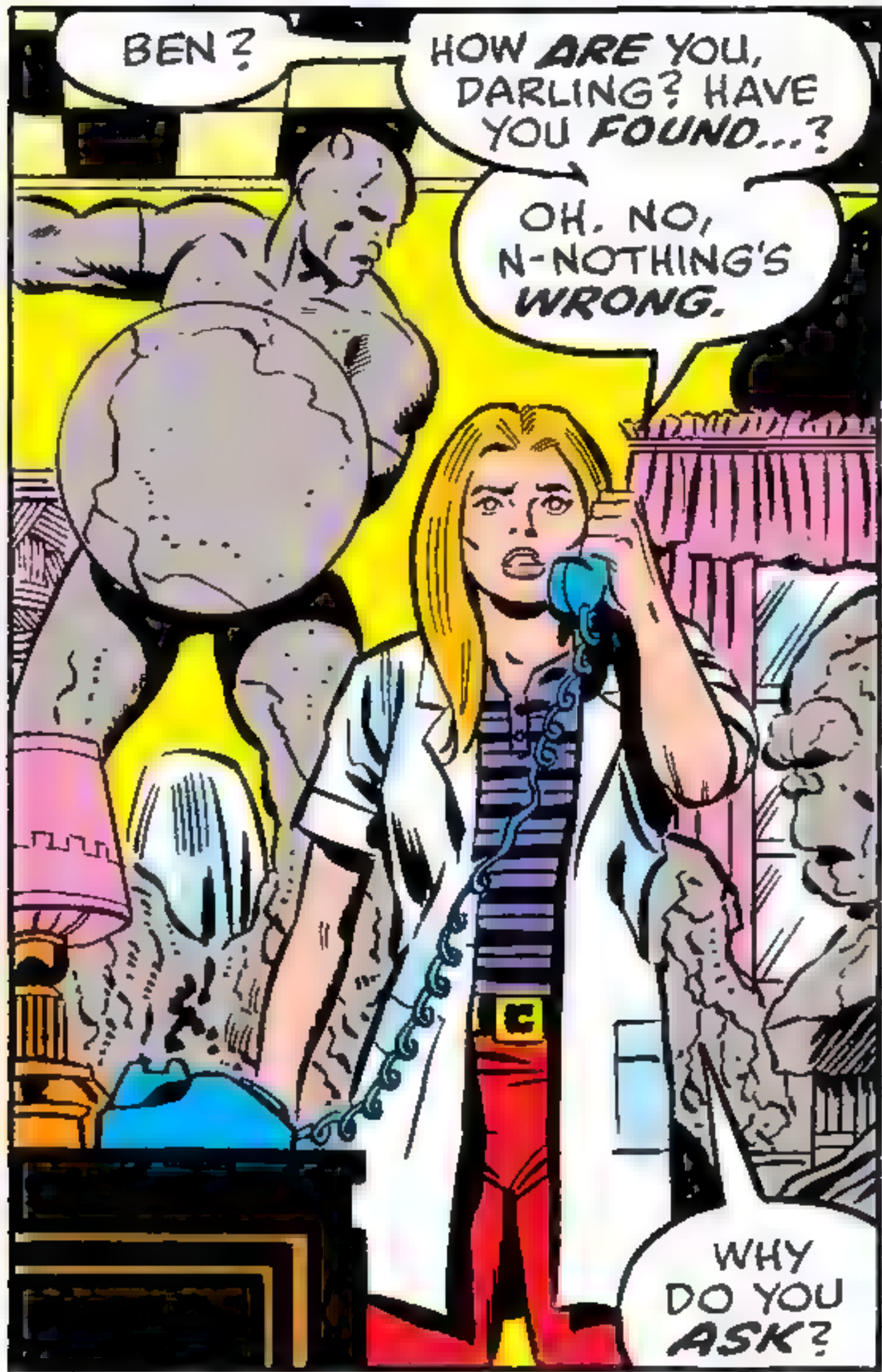
LEN WEIN:
BRAND-NEW
WRITER/EDITOR

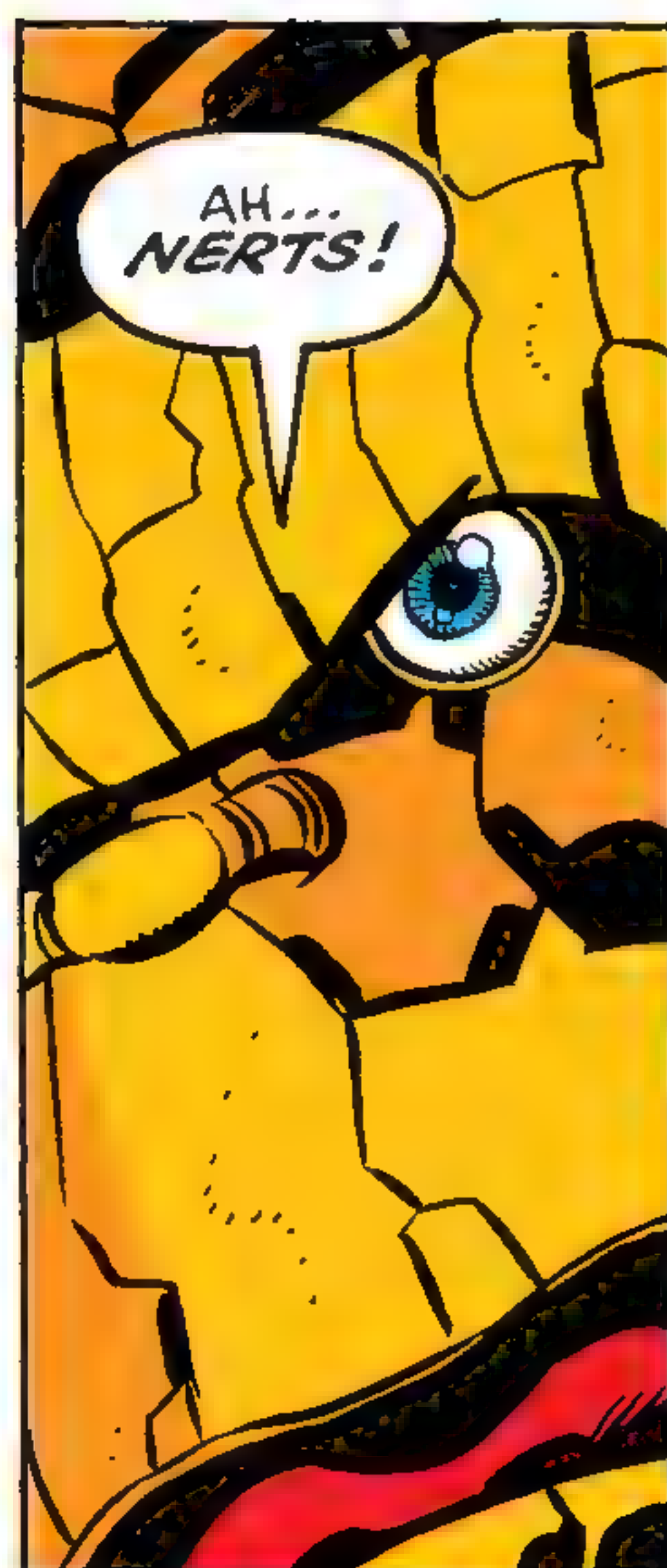
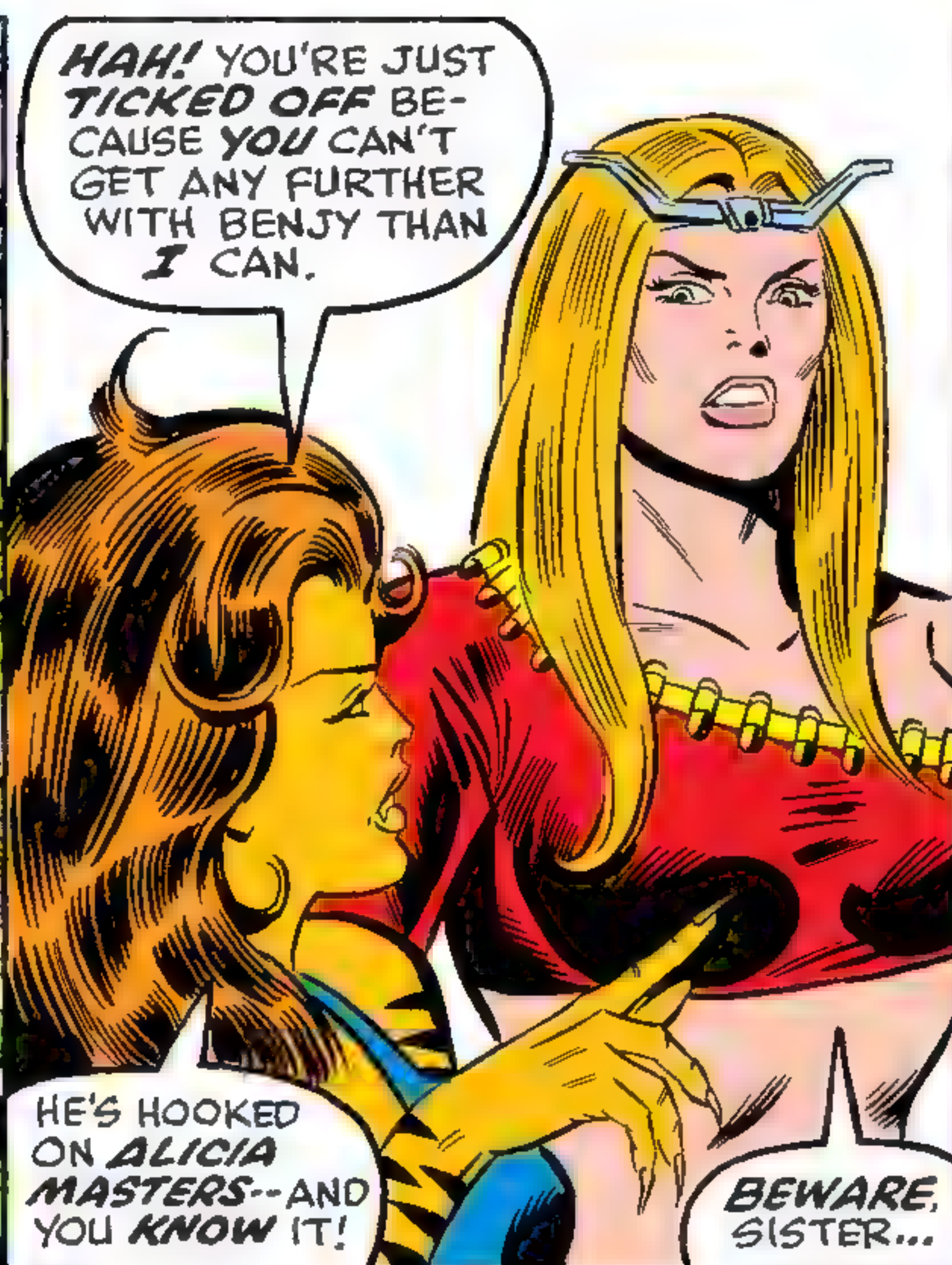
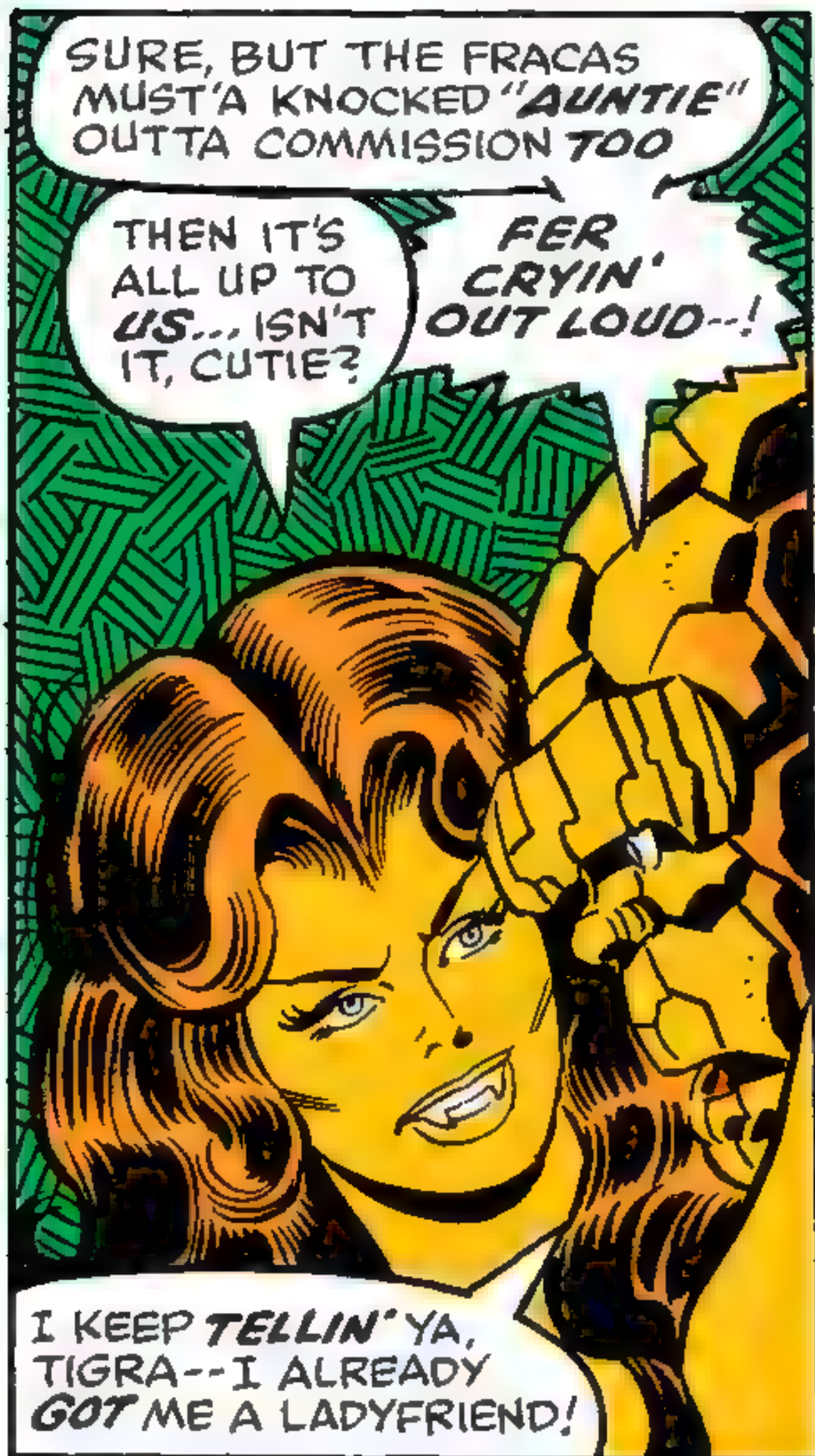
GEORGE PÉREZ:
RETURNING PRODIGAL
PENCILLER

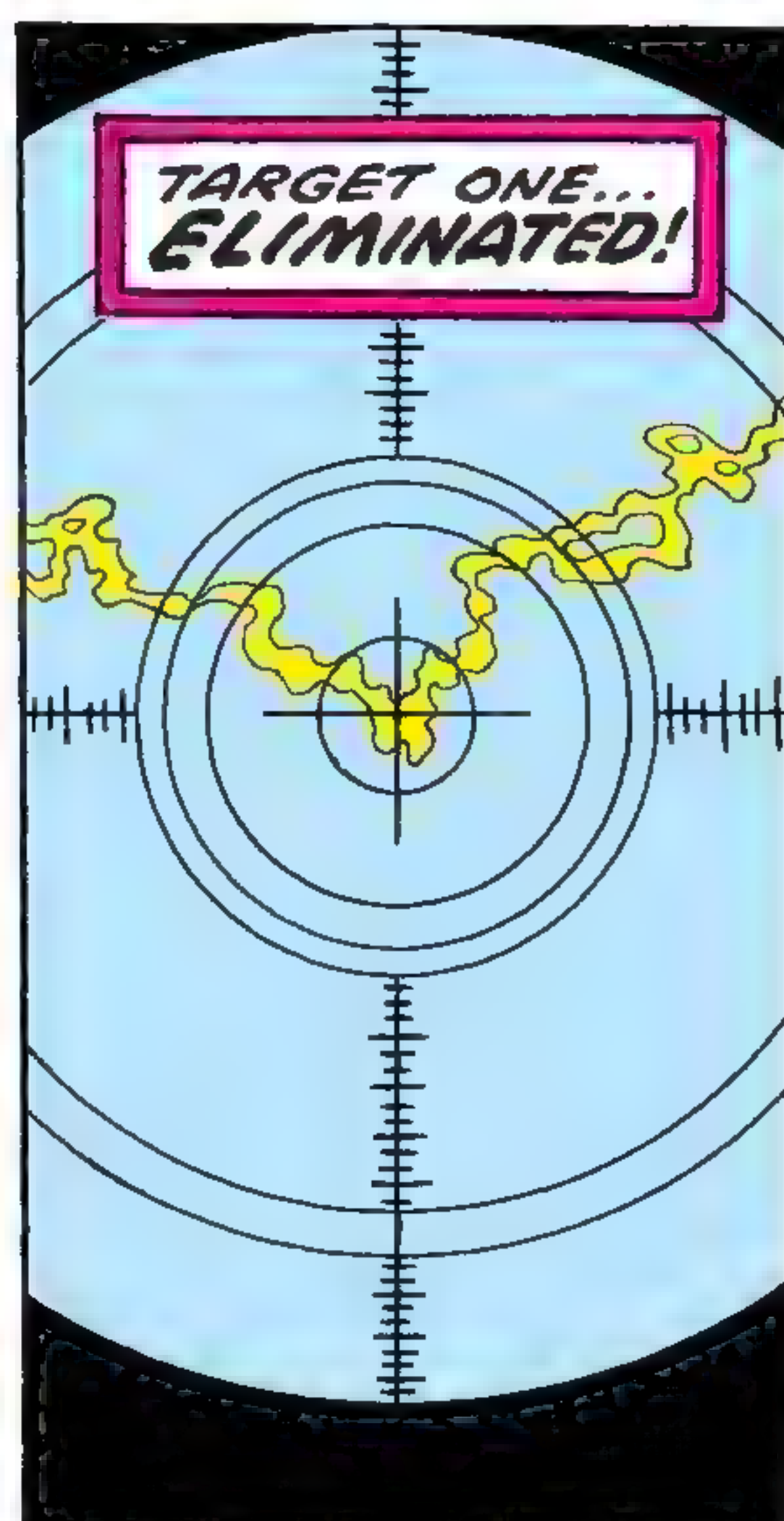
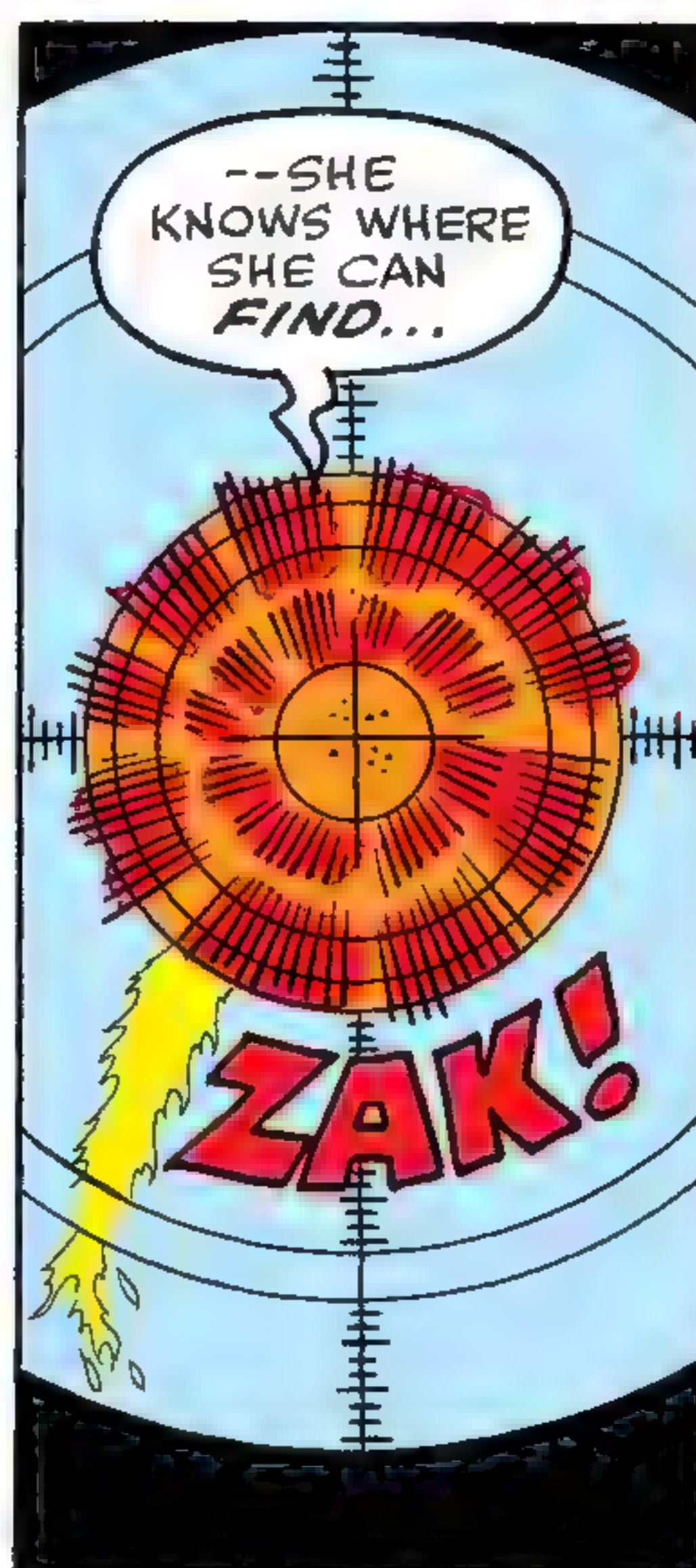
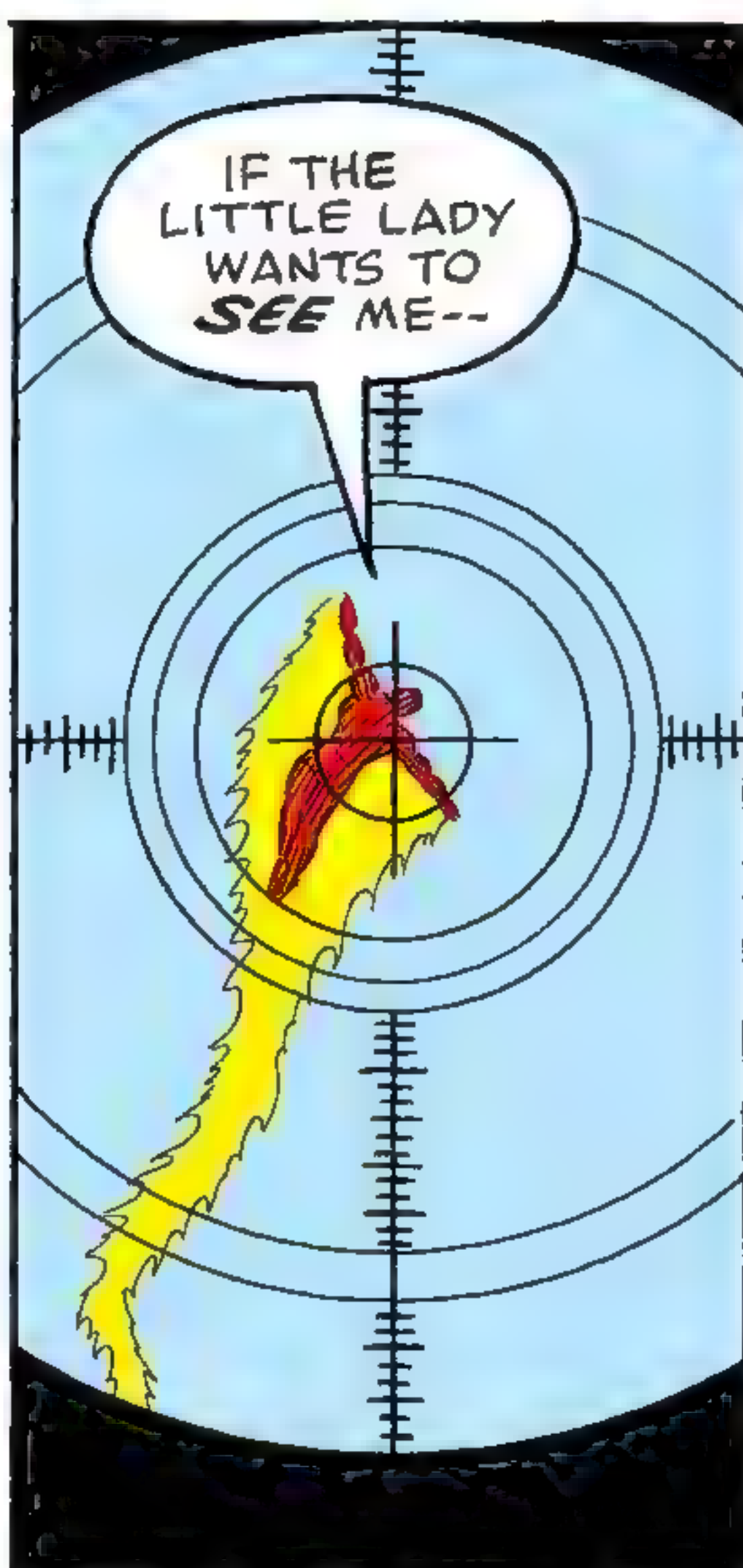
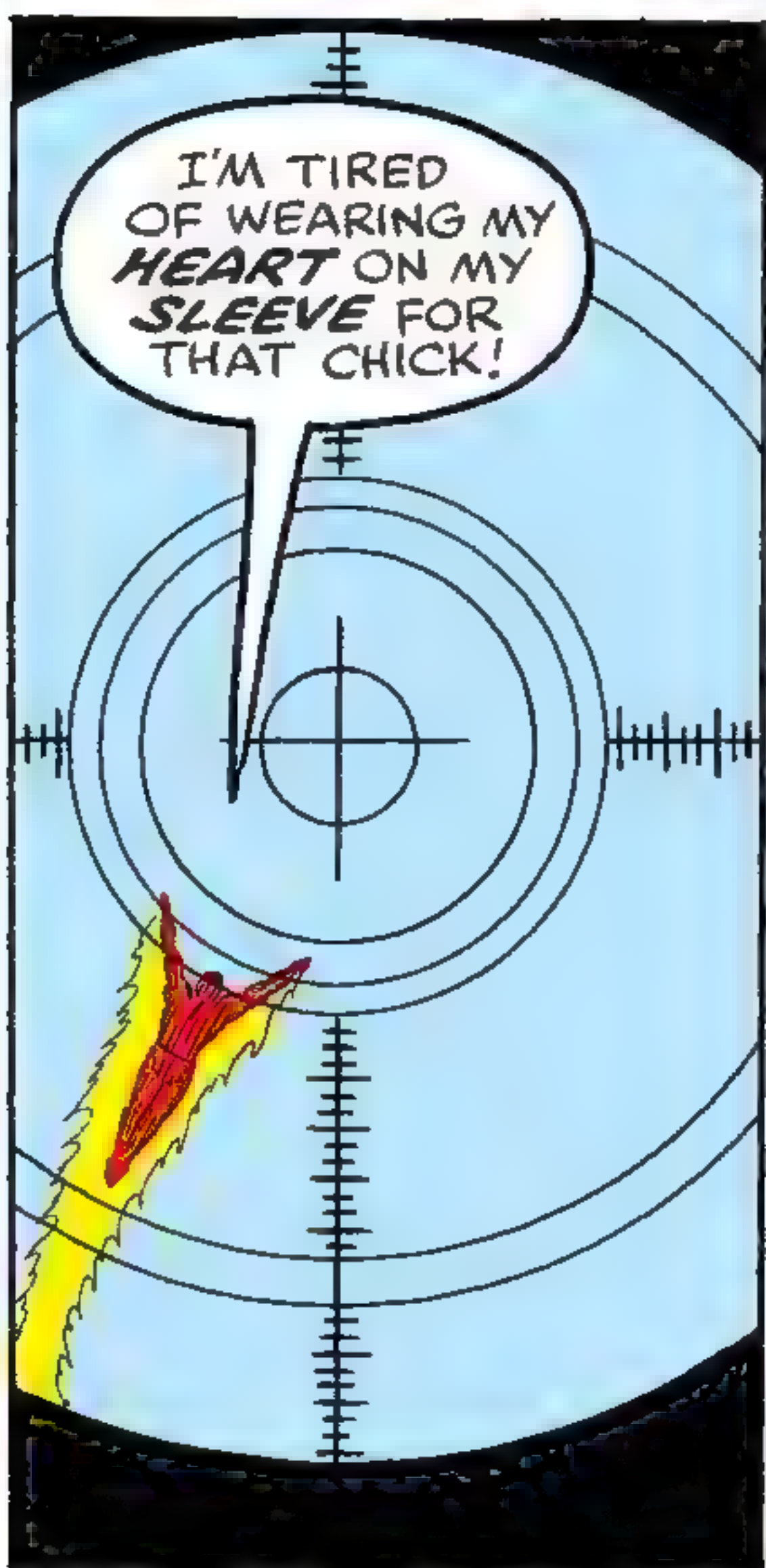
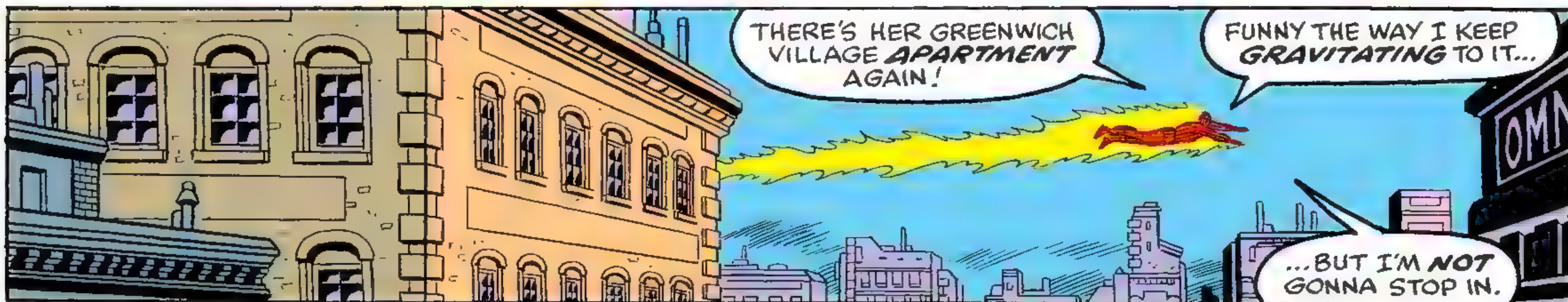
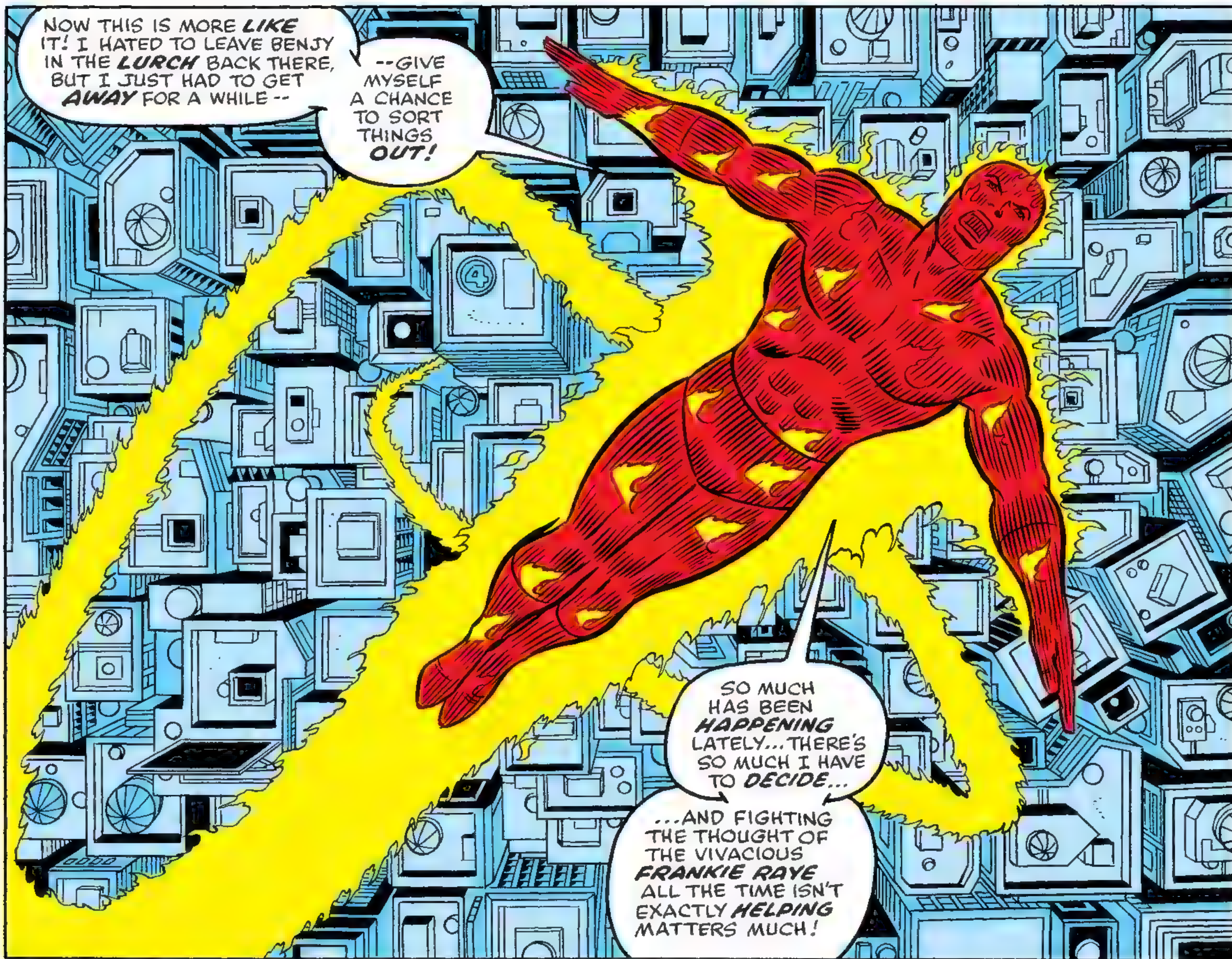
JOE SINNOTT
SAME OLD
EMBELLISHER

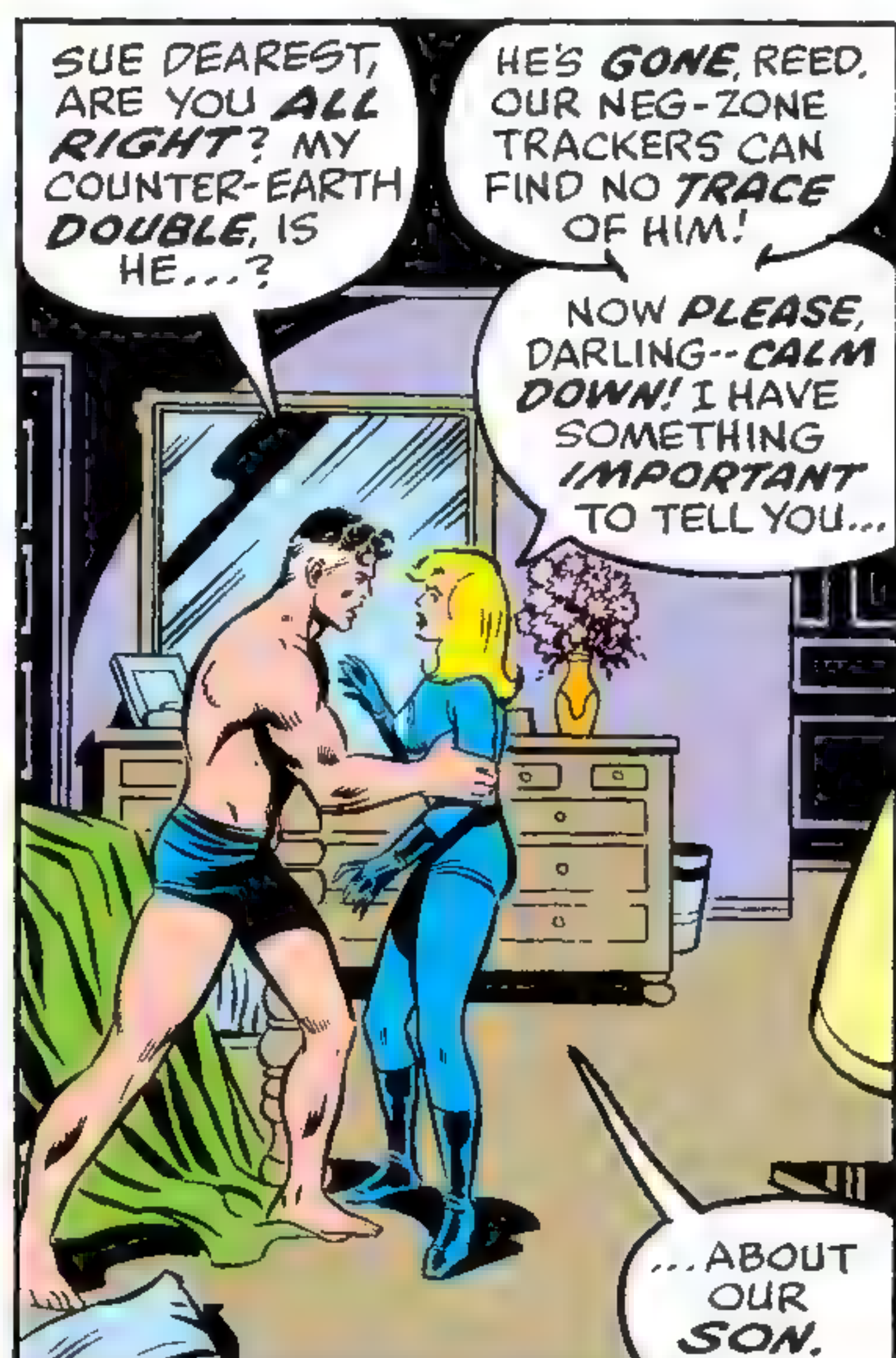
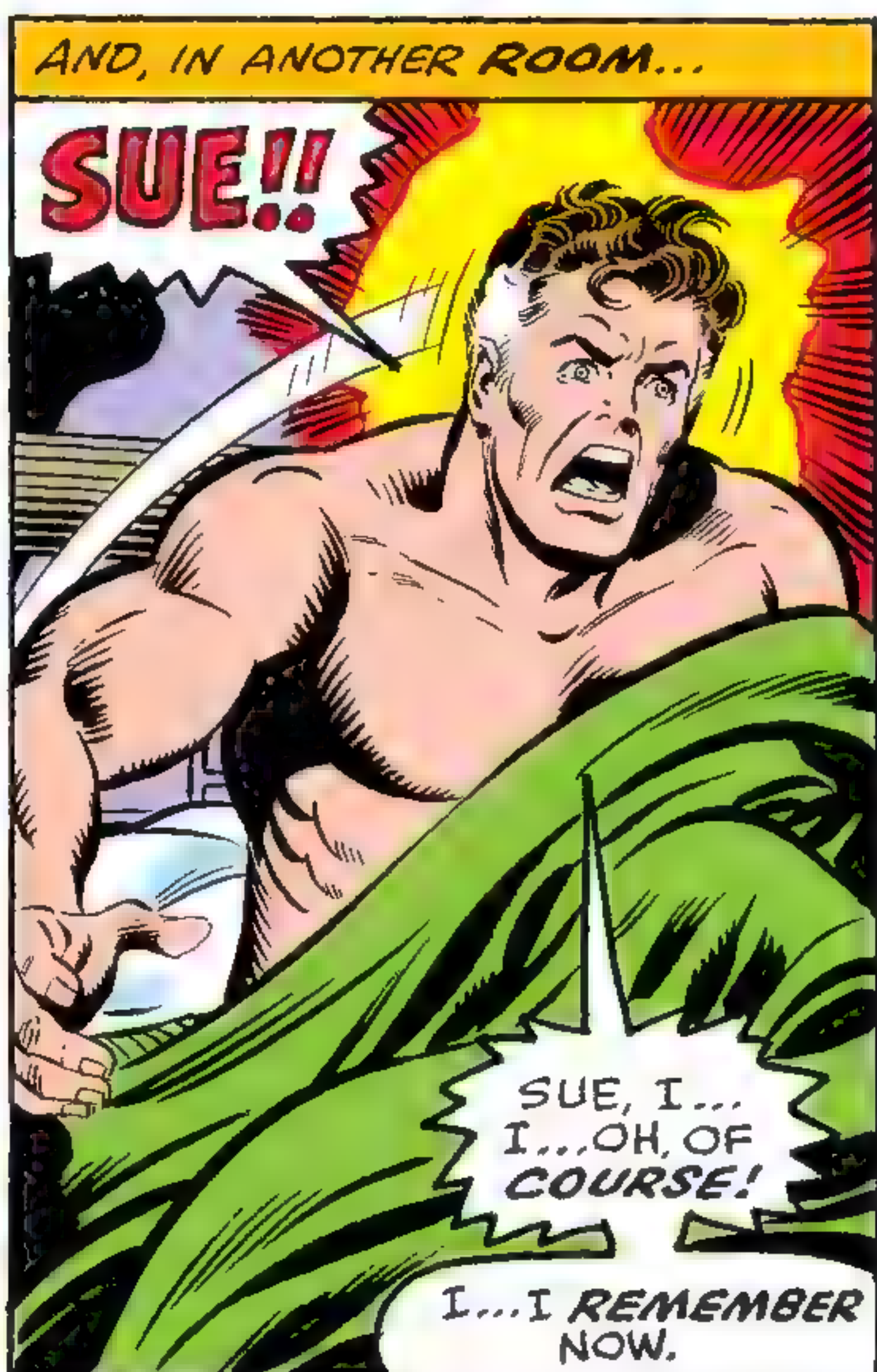
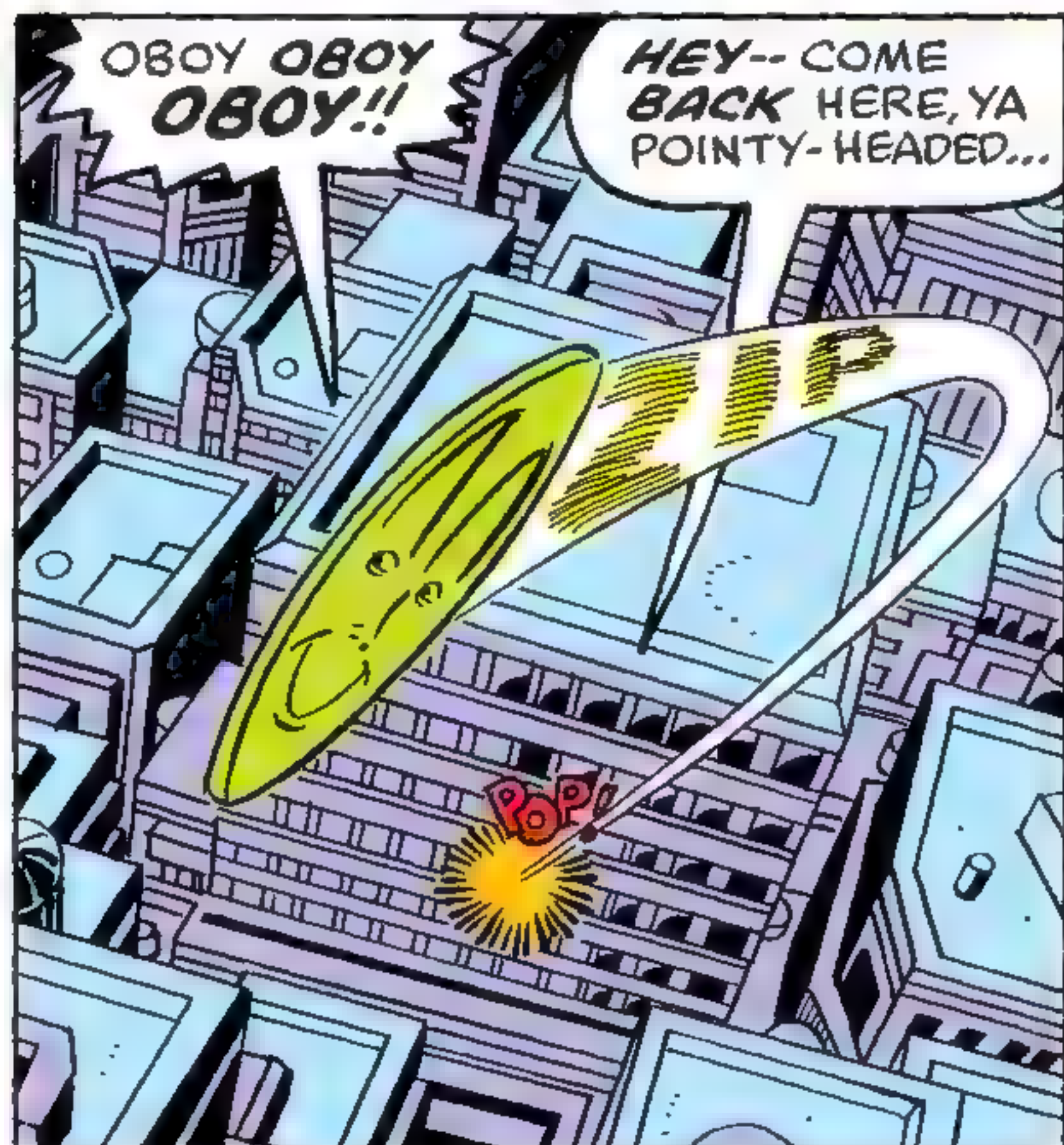
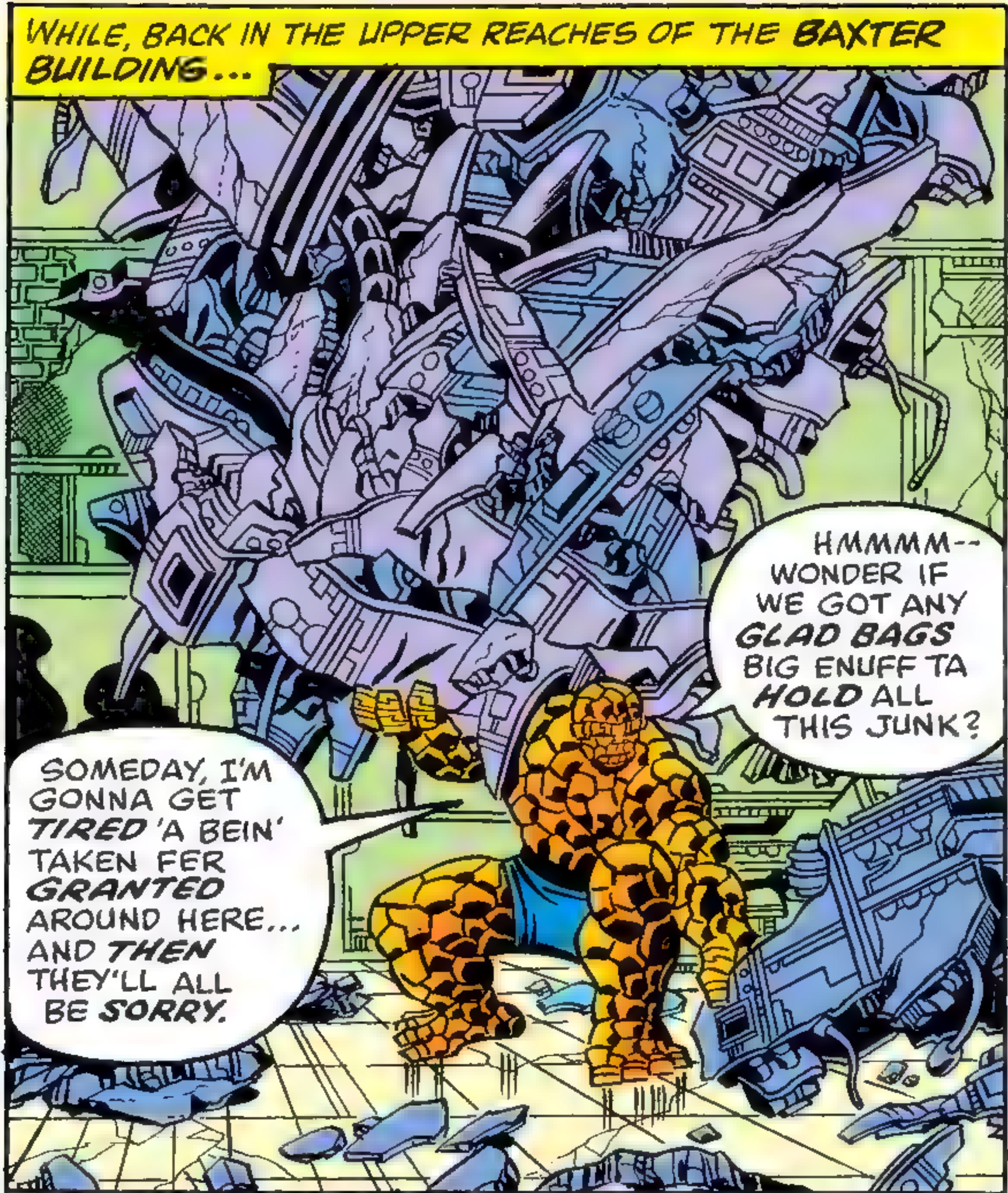
GLYNIS WEIN: COLORIST
JOE ROSEN: LETTERER

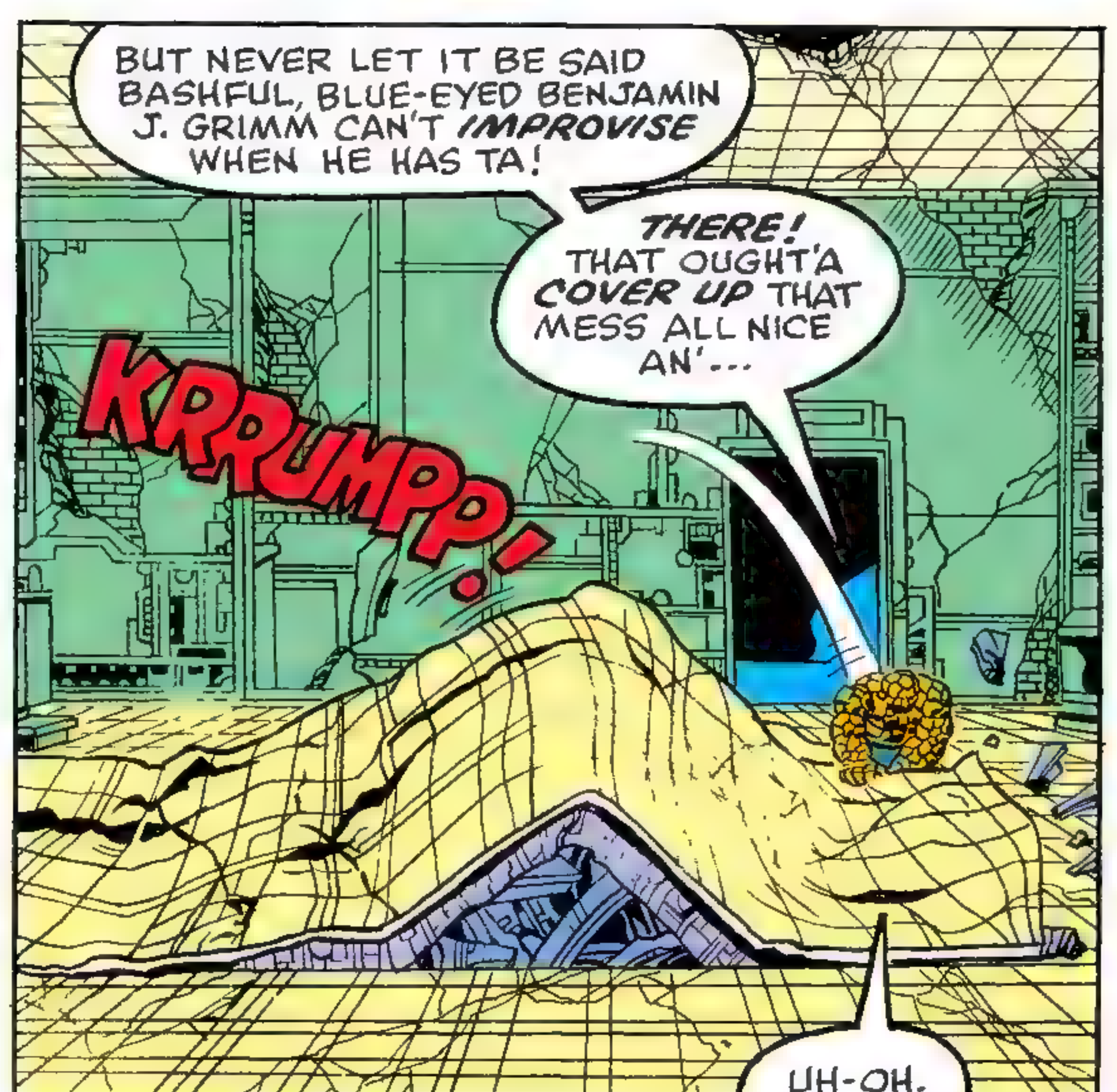
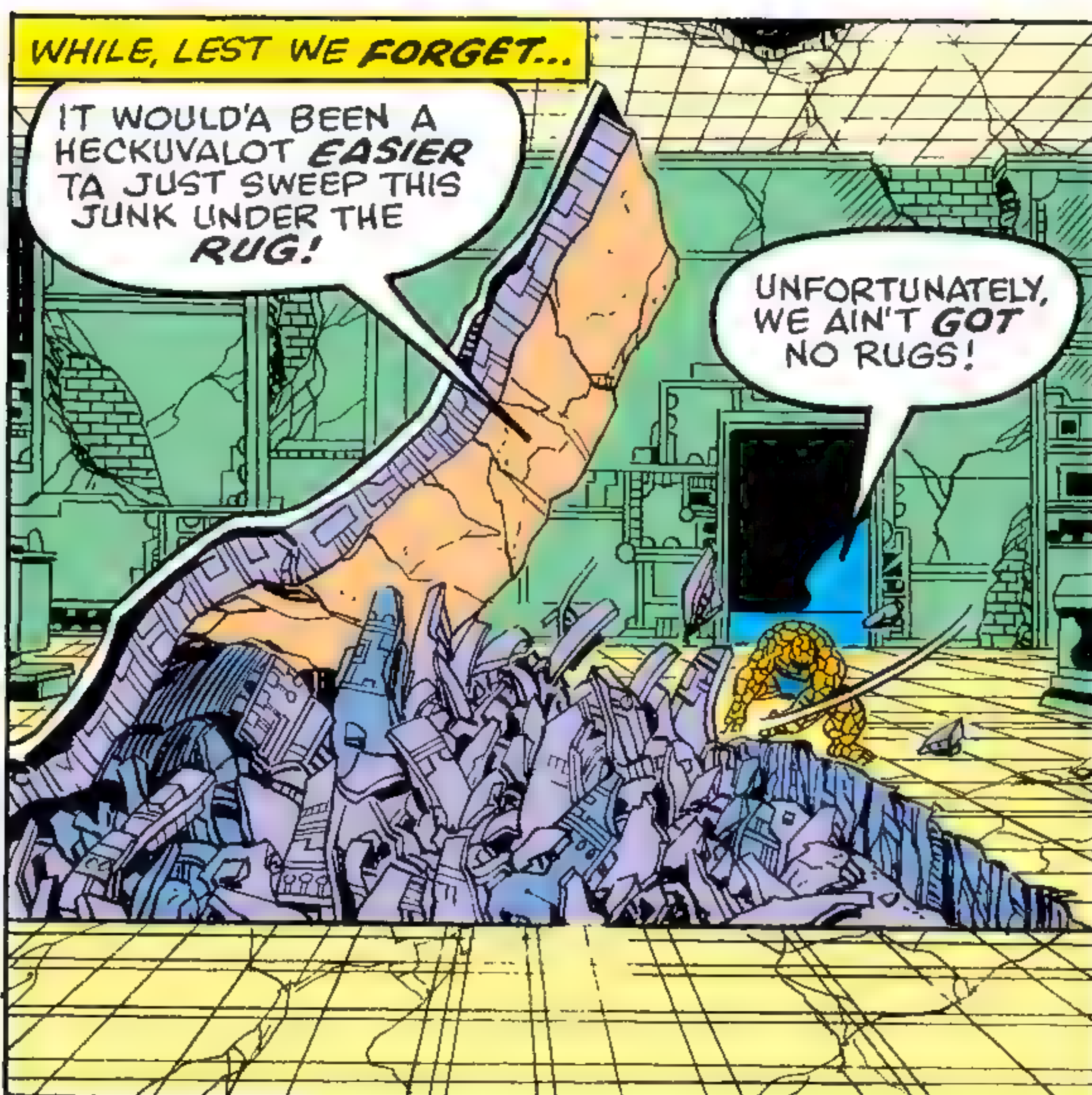
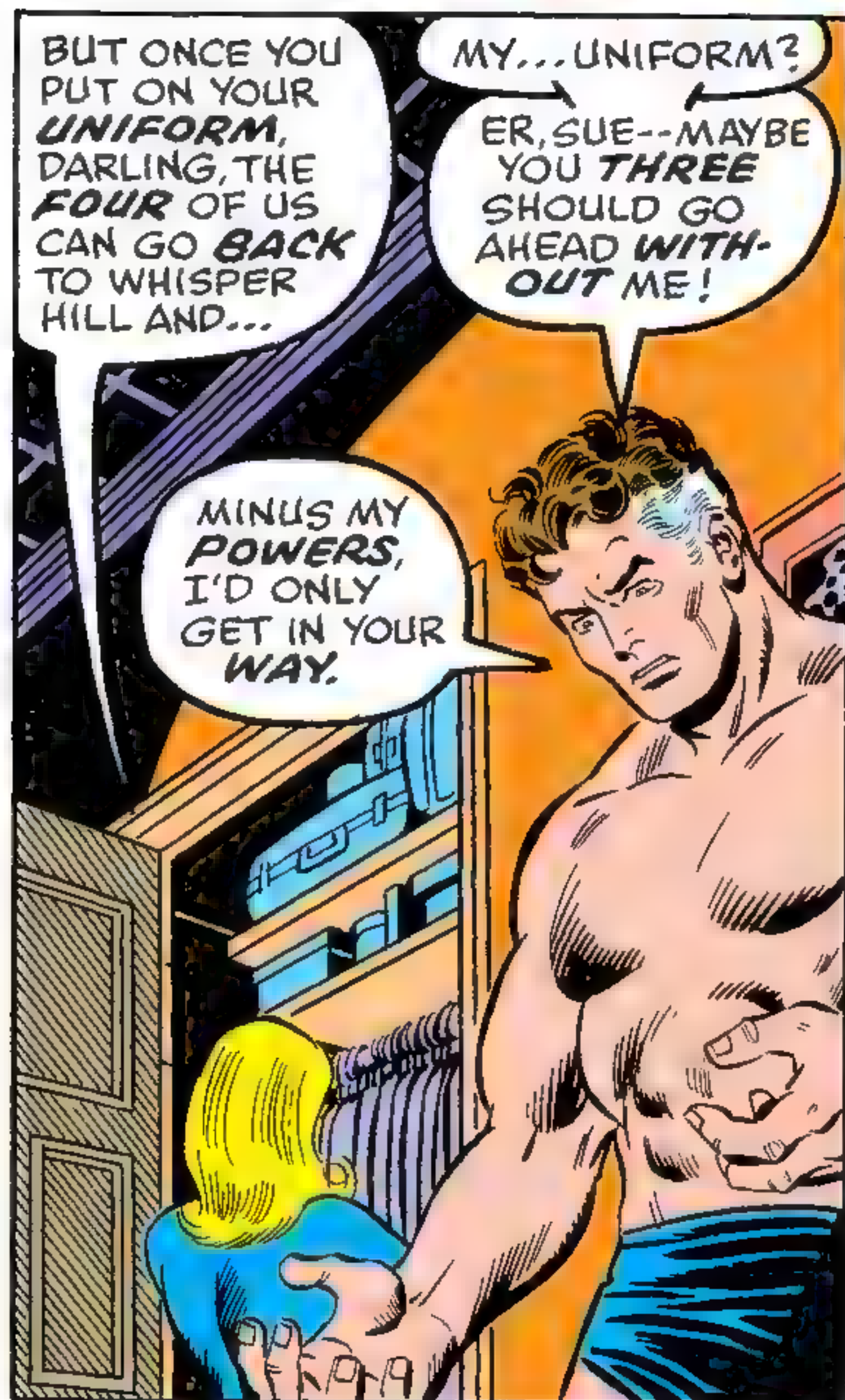


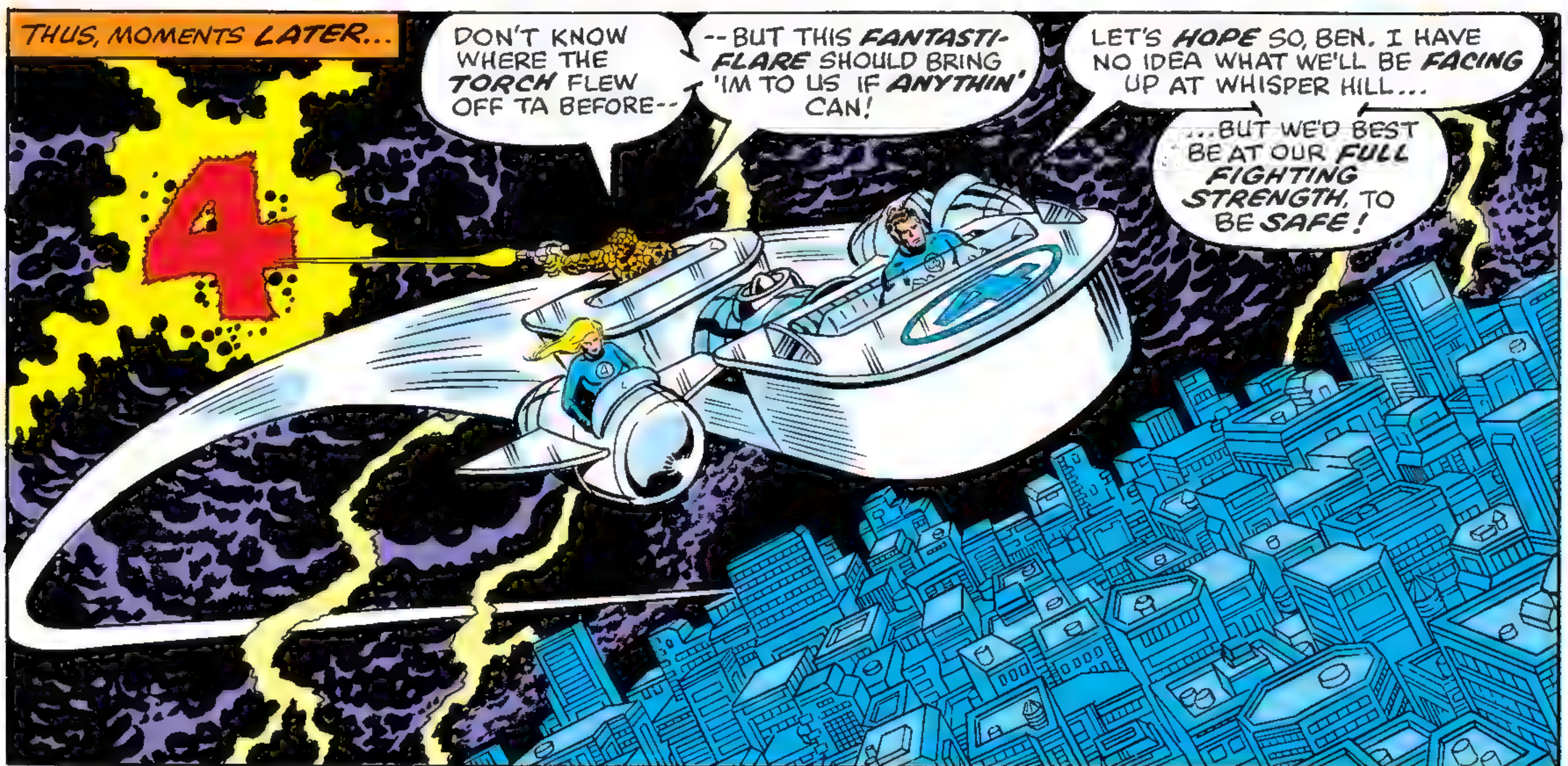
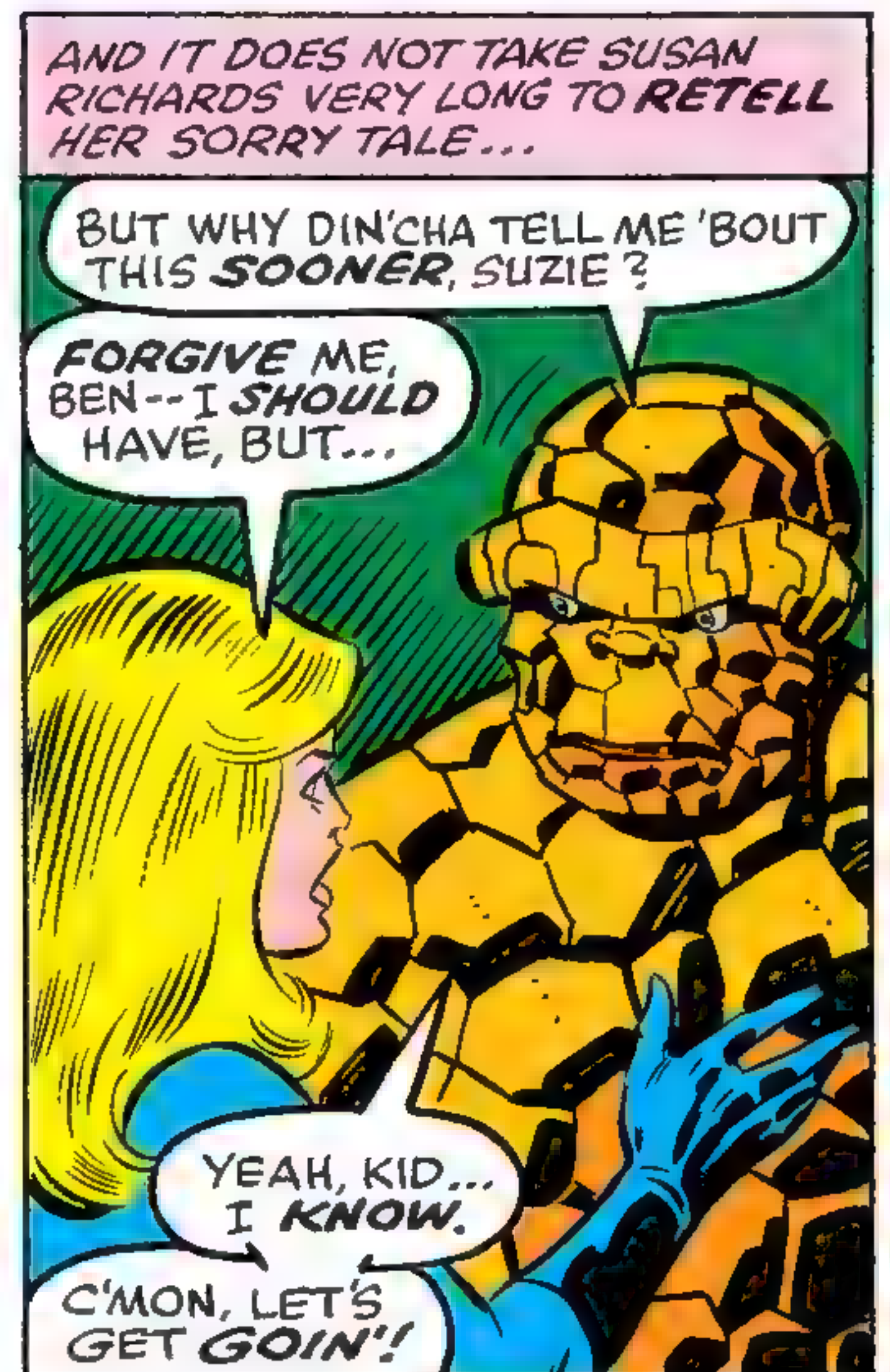
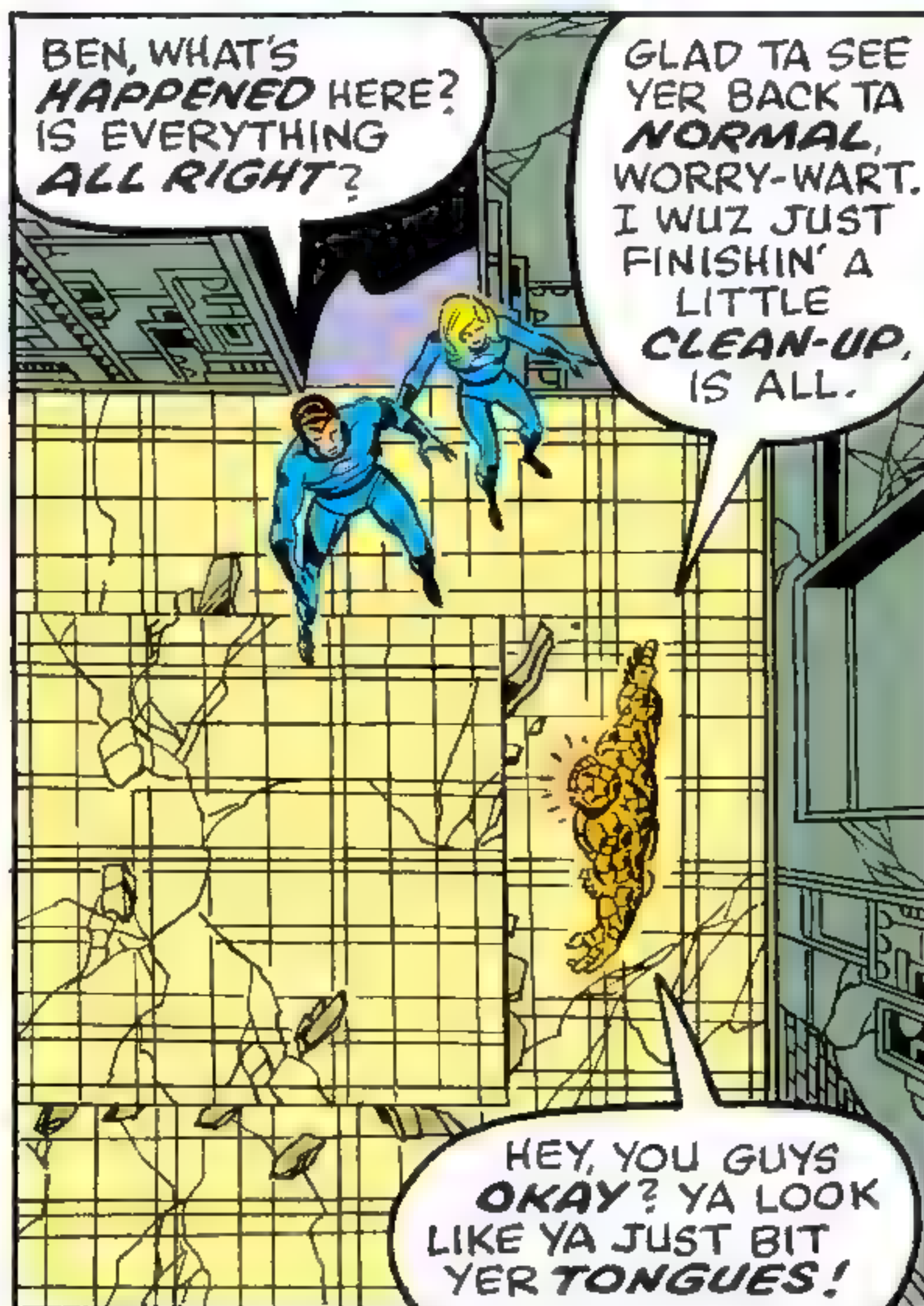
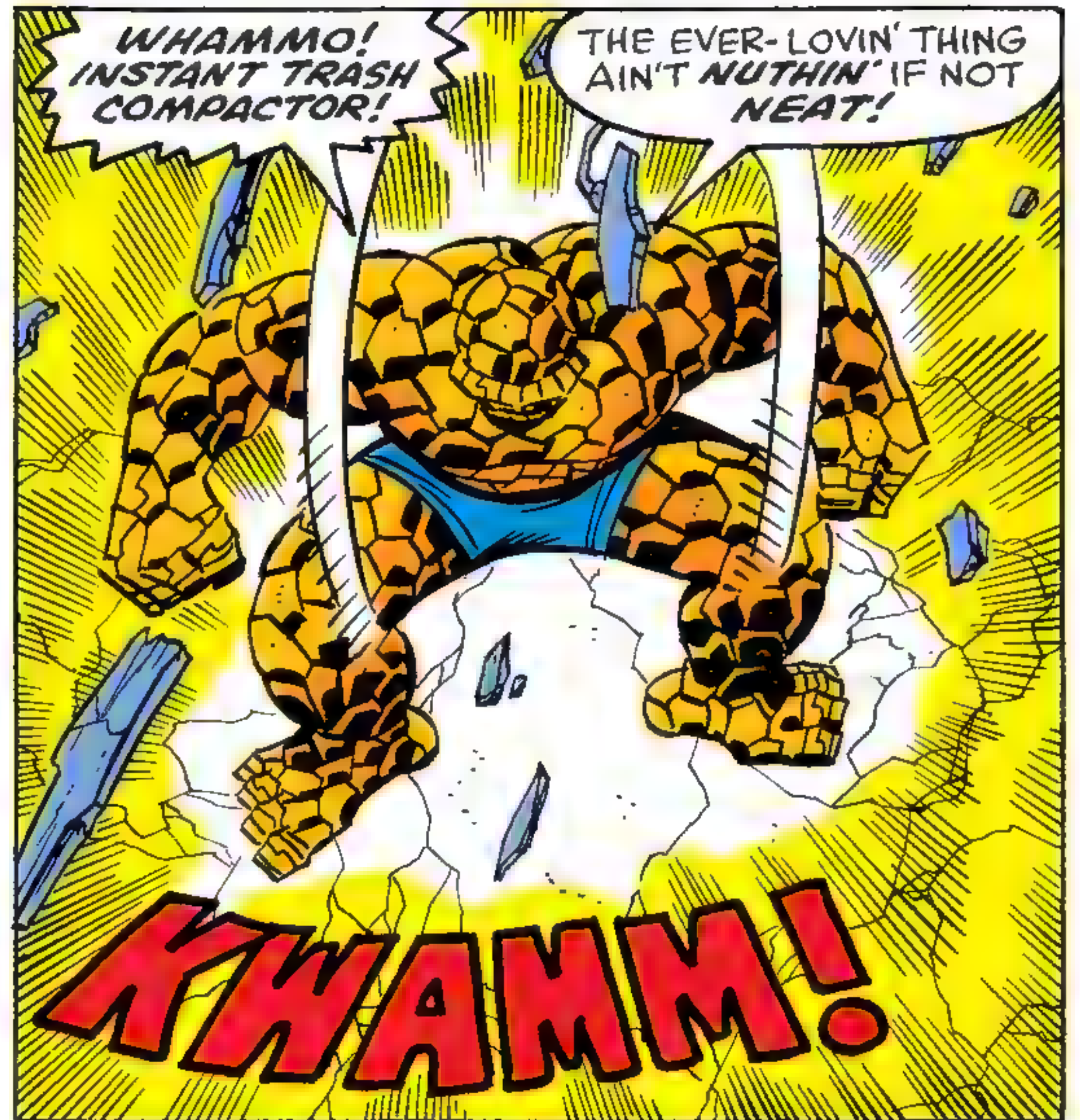
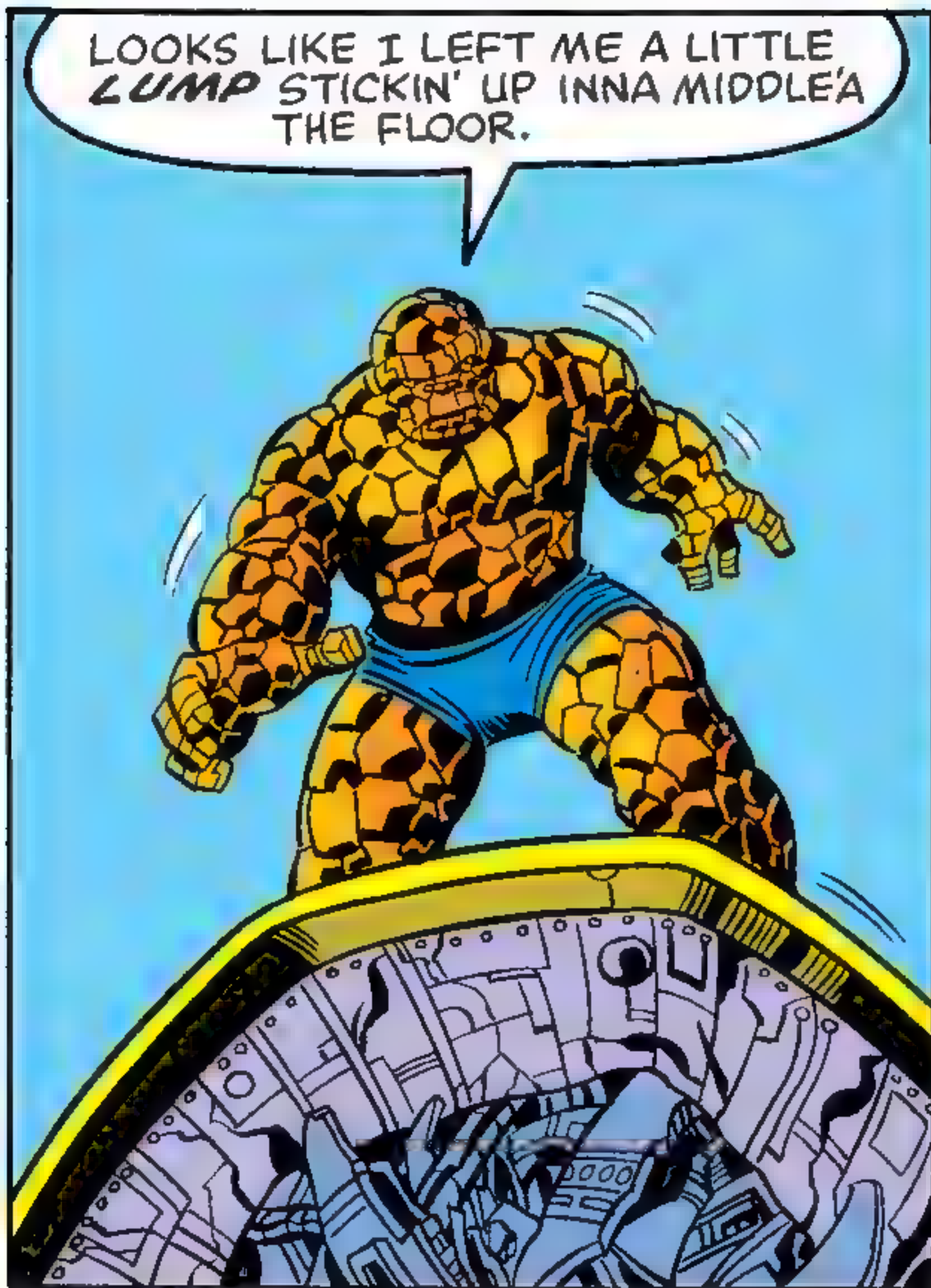


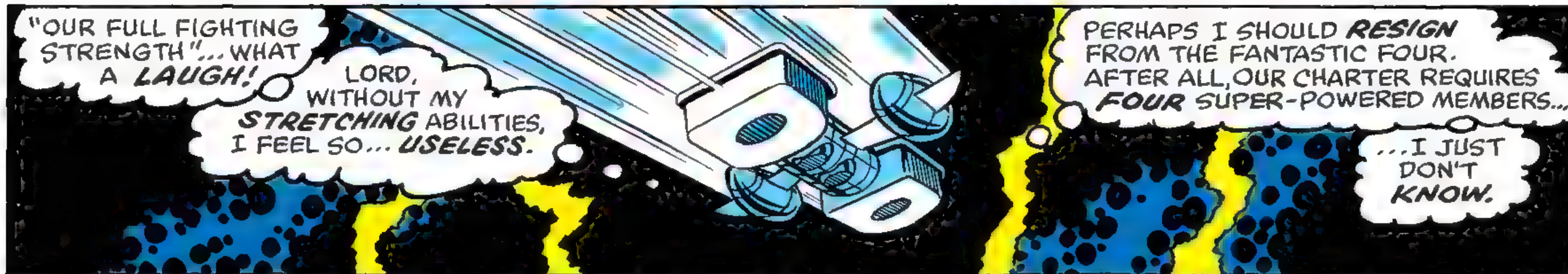












"OUR FULL FIGHTING STRENGTH"... WHAT A **LAUGH!**

LORD, WITHOUT MY **STRETCHING** ABILITIES, I FEEL SO... **USELESS.**

PERHAPS I SHOULD **RESIGN** FROM THE FANTASTIC FOUR. AFTER ALL, OUR CHARTER REQUIRES **FOUR** SUPER-POWERED MEMBERS...

...I JUST DON'T **KNOW.**

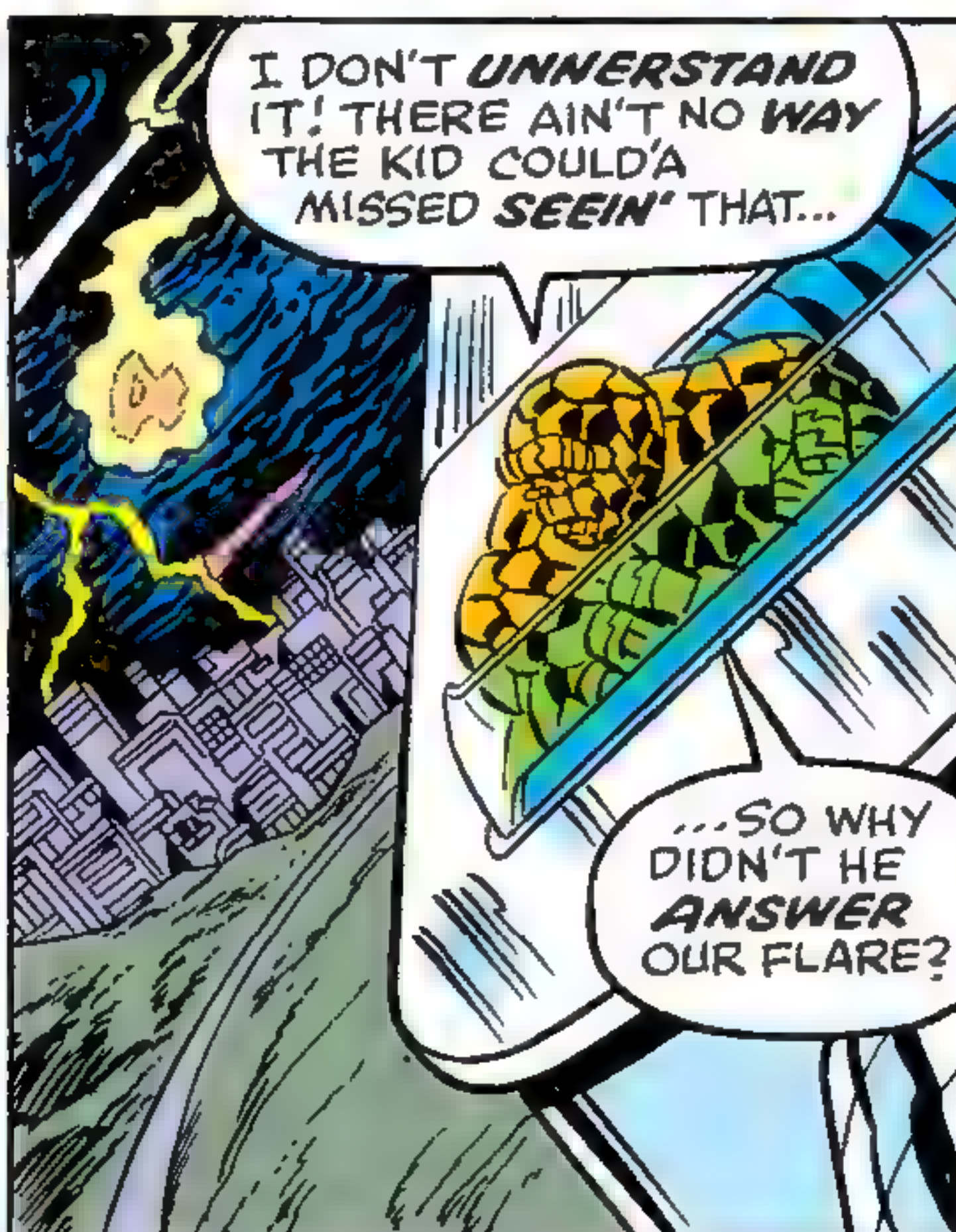


WELL, **WHAT-EVER** I DECIDE TO DO, THERE'S ONE THING I **DO** KNOW--

--THERE IS **NOTHING** THAT WILL STOP ME FROM SAVING MY **SON!**

REED?
REED, ARE YOU...?

I'M **FINE**, SUE... JUST... **FINE!**



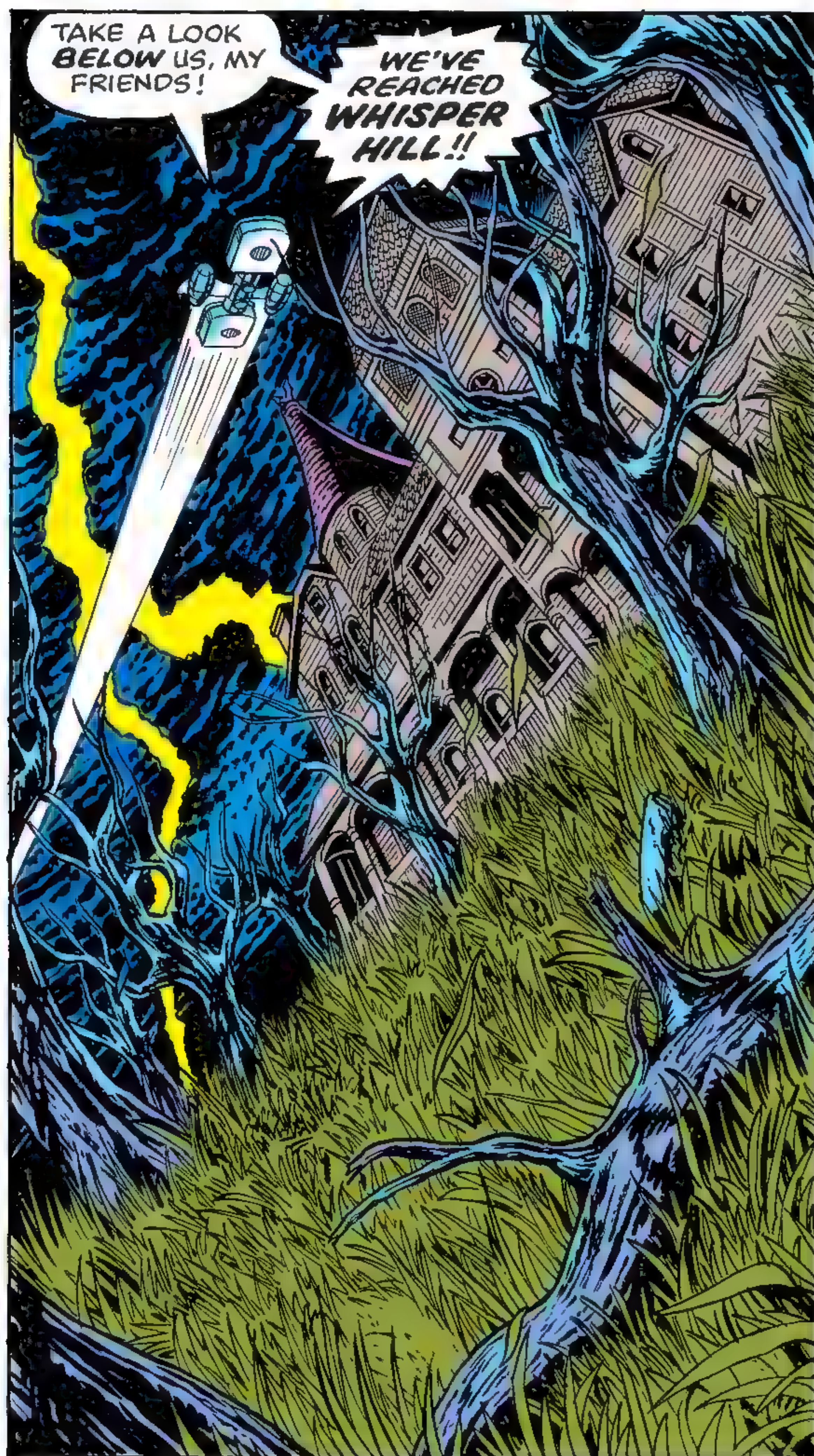
I DON'T **UNNERSTAND** IT! THERE AIN'T NO **WAY** THE KID COULDA MISSED **SEEN'** THAT...

...SO WHY DIDN'T HE **ANSWER** OUR FLARE?



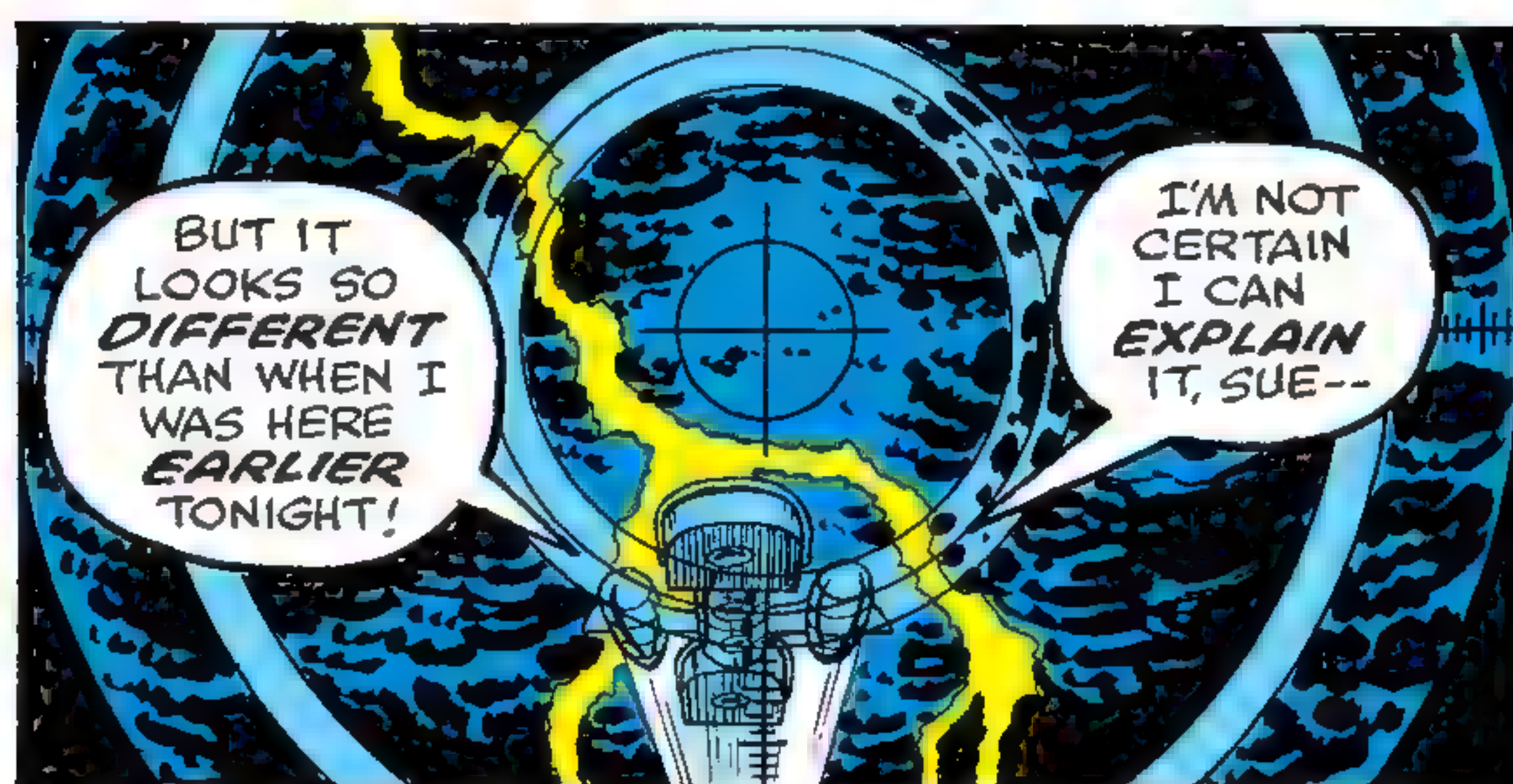
I'M AFRAID WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO **WITHOUT** HIM, BEN--

--BECAUSE WE'VE RUN OUT OF TIME TO **WAIT!**



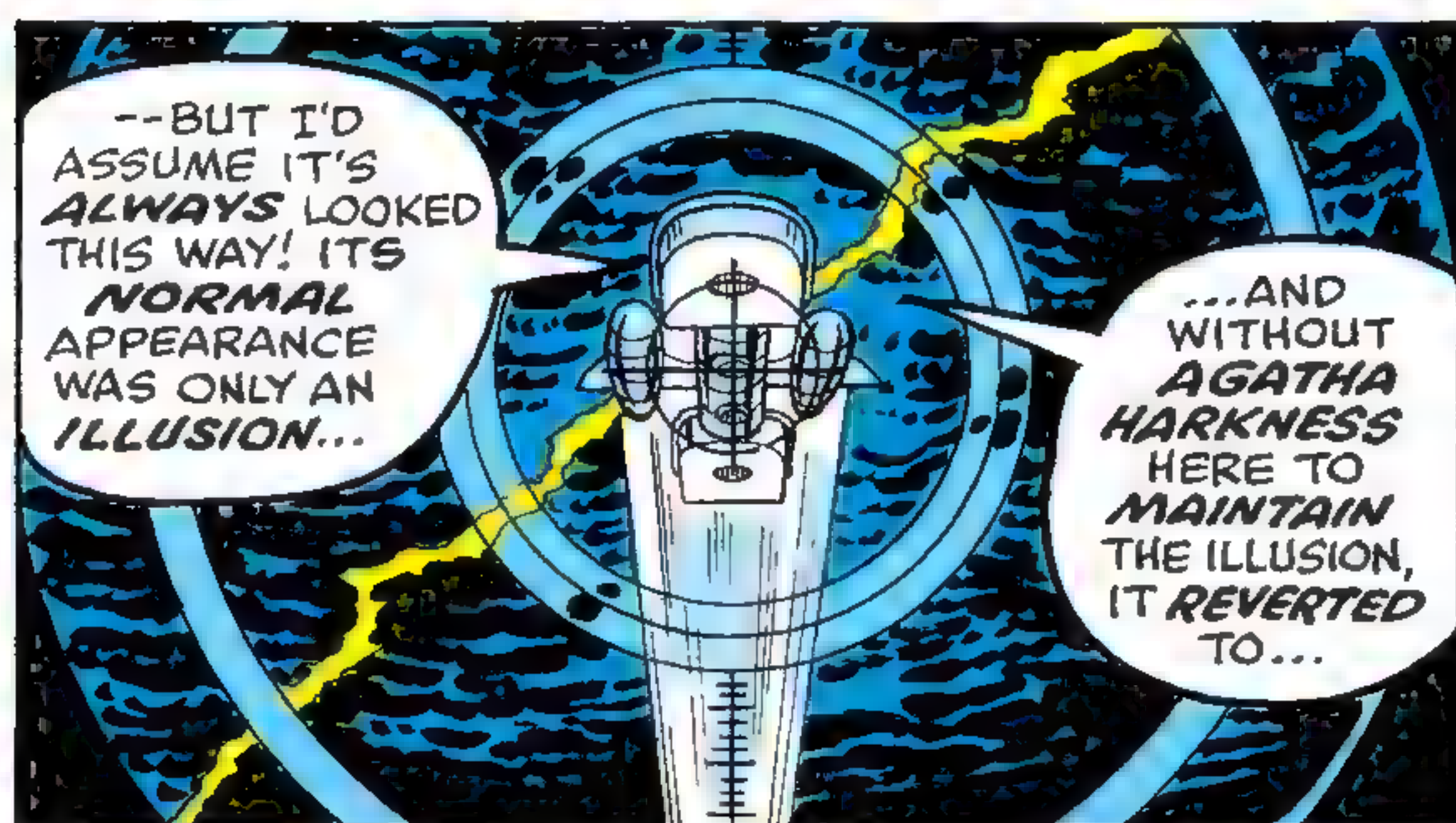
TAKE A LOOK **BELOW** US, MY FRIENDS!

WE'VE REACHED **WHISPER HILL!!**



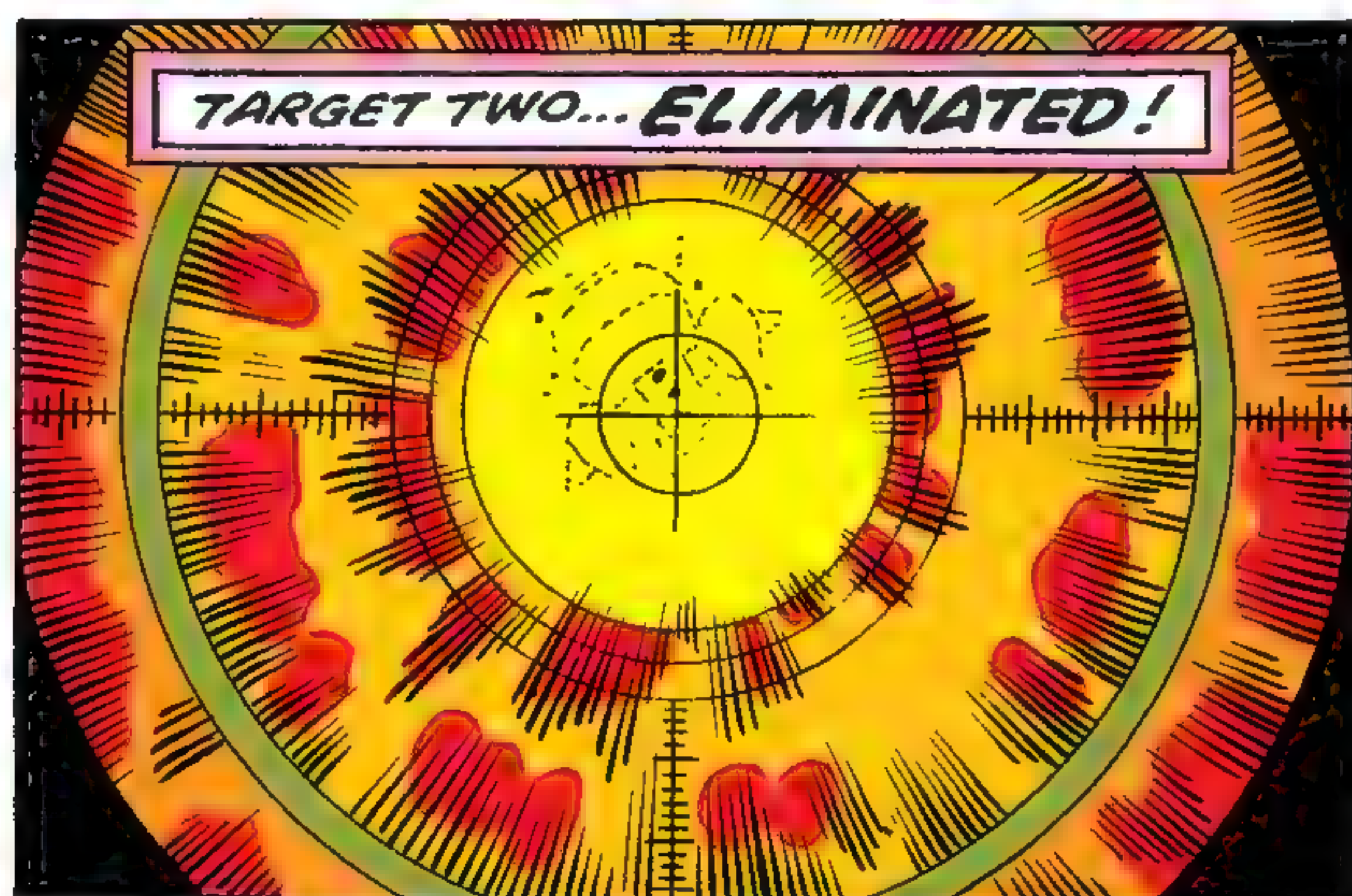
BUT IT LOOKS SO **DIFFERENT** THAN WHEN I WAS HERE **EARLIER** TONIGHT!

I'M NOT CERTAIN I CAN **EXPLAIN** IT, SUE--

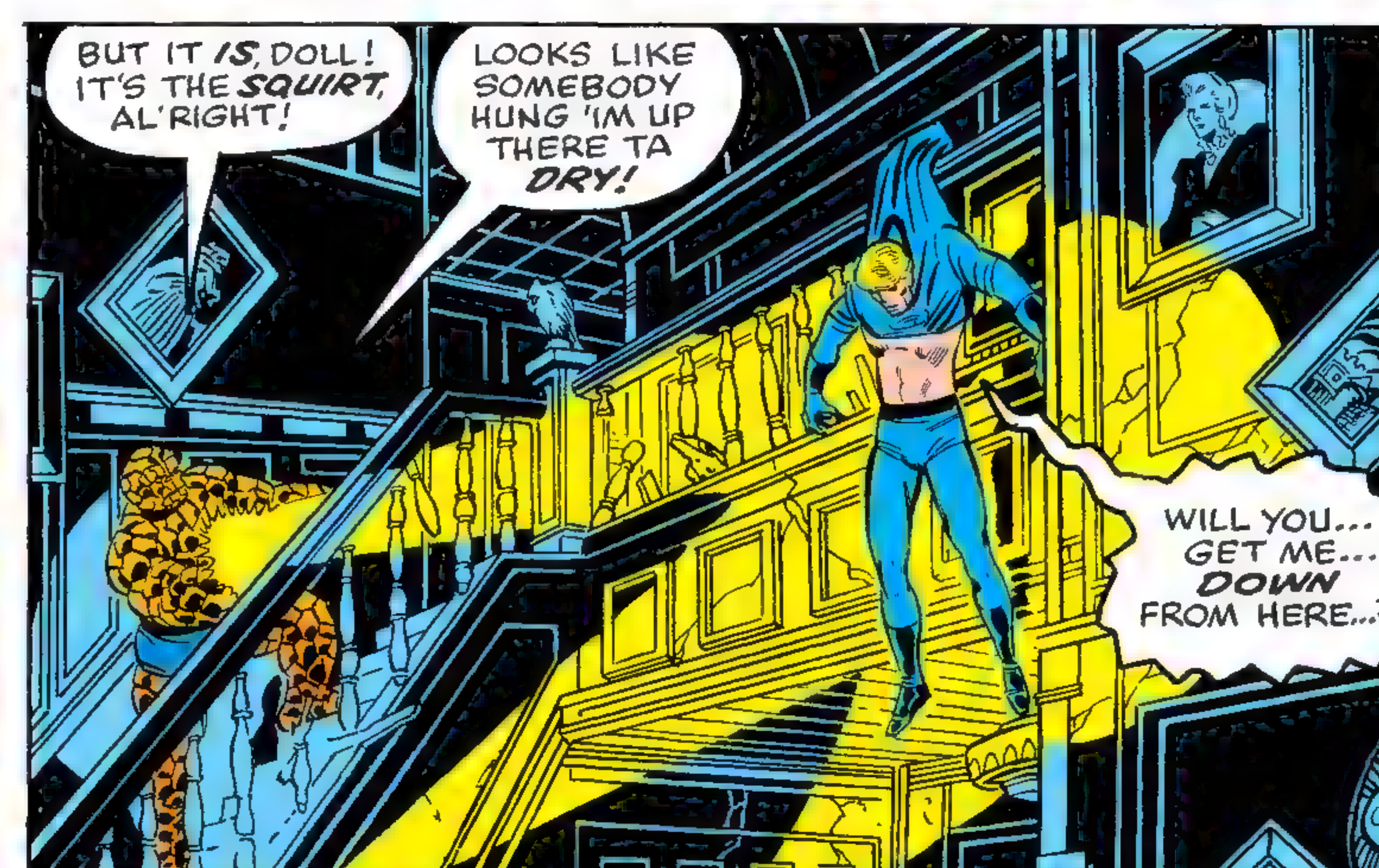
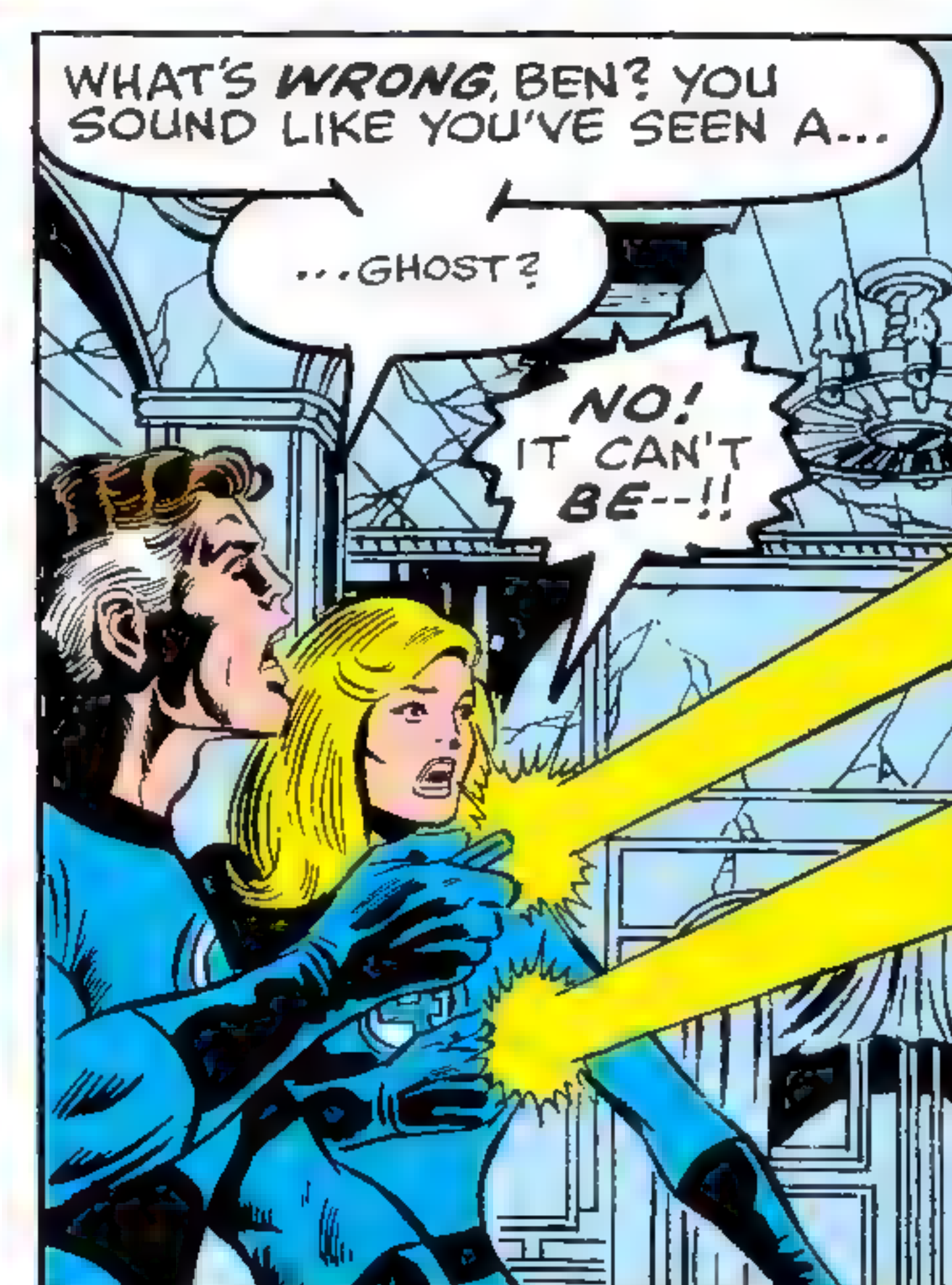
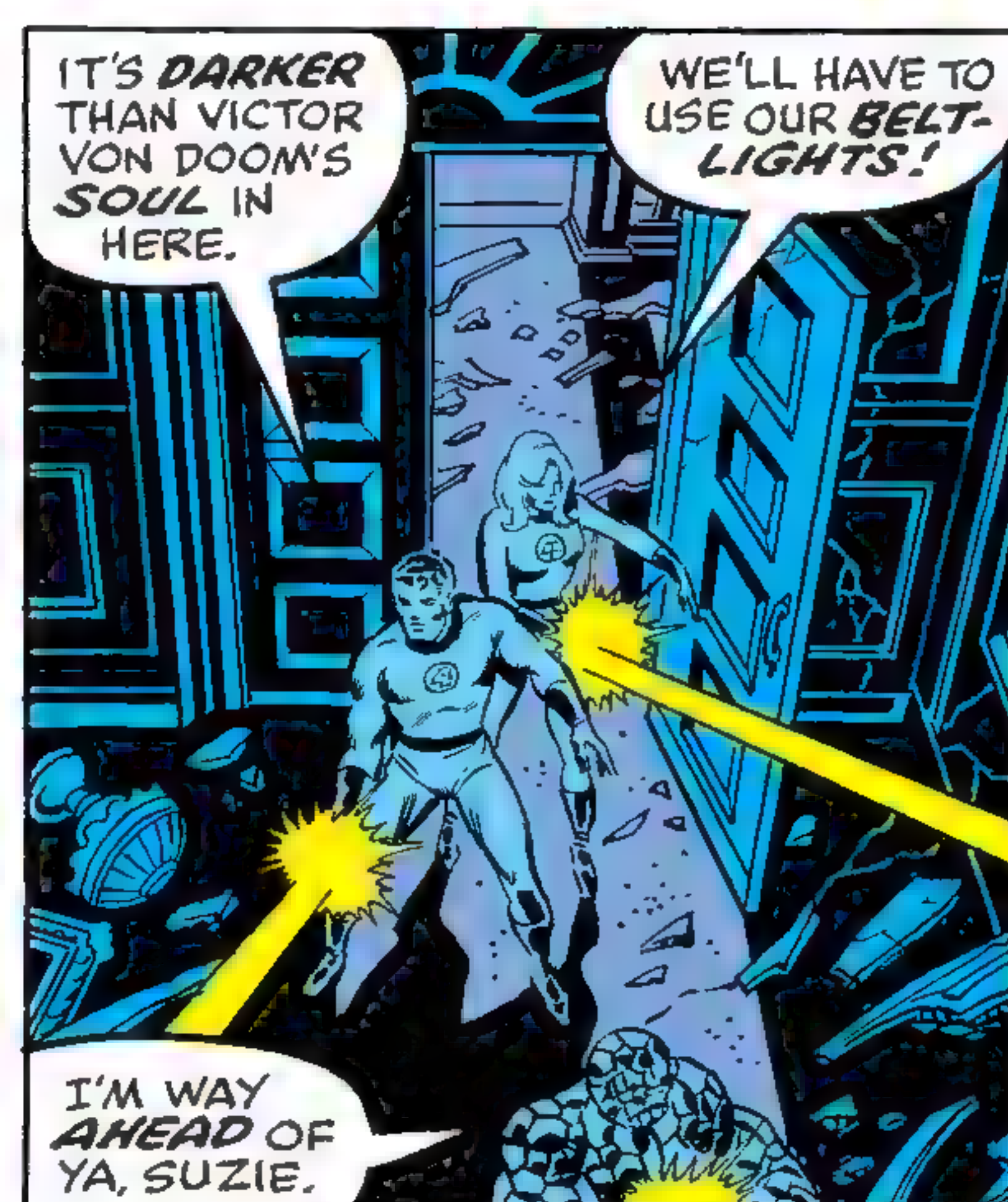
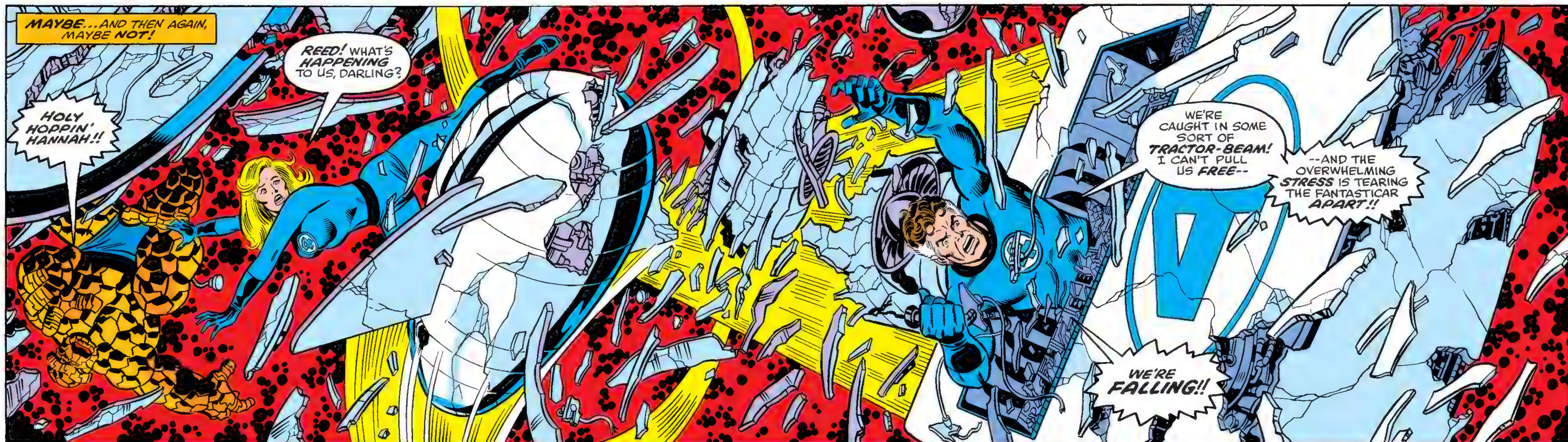


--BUT I'D ASSUME IT'S **ALWAYS** LOOKED THIS WAY! ITS **NORMAL** APPEARANCE WAS ONLY AN **ILLUSION...**

...AND WITHOUT **AGATHA HARKNESS** HERE TO **MAINTAIN** THE ILLUSION, IT **REVERTED** TO...



TARGET TWO... ELIMINATED!

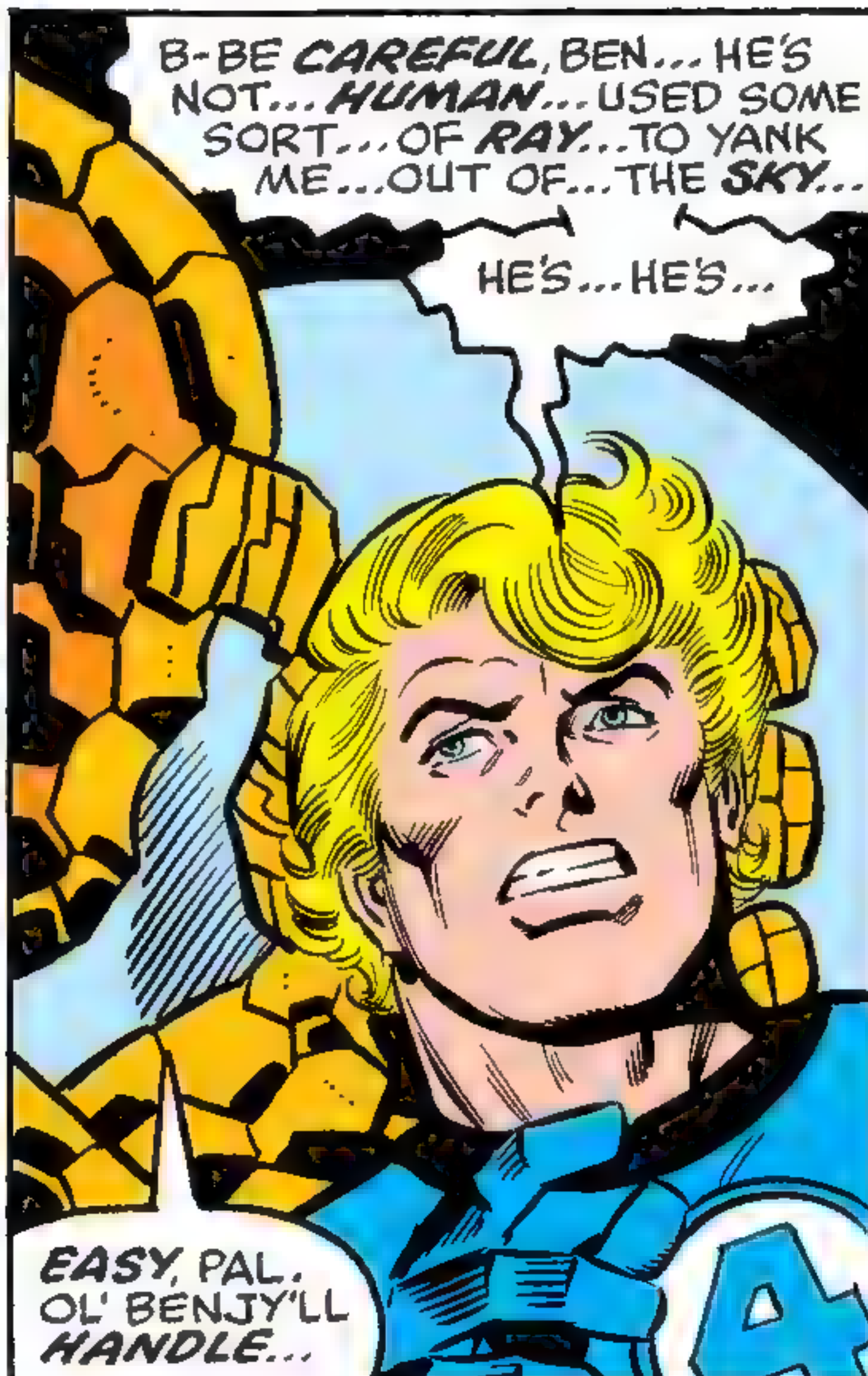




WELL, AT LEAST YER STILL **BREATHIN'**, HOTSHOT--

--WHICH IS **MORE** THAN I CAN SAY FER WHOEVER **DONE** THIS TO YA ONCE I GET MY **MITTS** ON 'IM!

WHAT **HAPPENED** TO YA, ANYHOW?



B-BE **CAREFUL**, BEN... HE'S NOT... **HUMAN**... USED SOME SORT... OF **RAY**... TO YANK ME... OUT OF... THE **SKY**...

HE'S... HE'S...

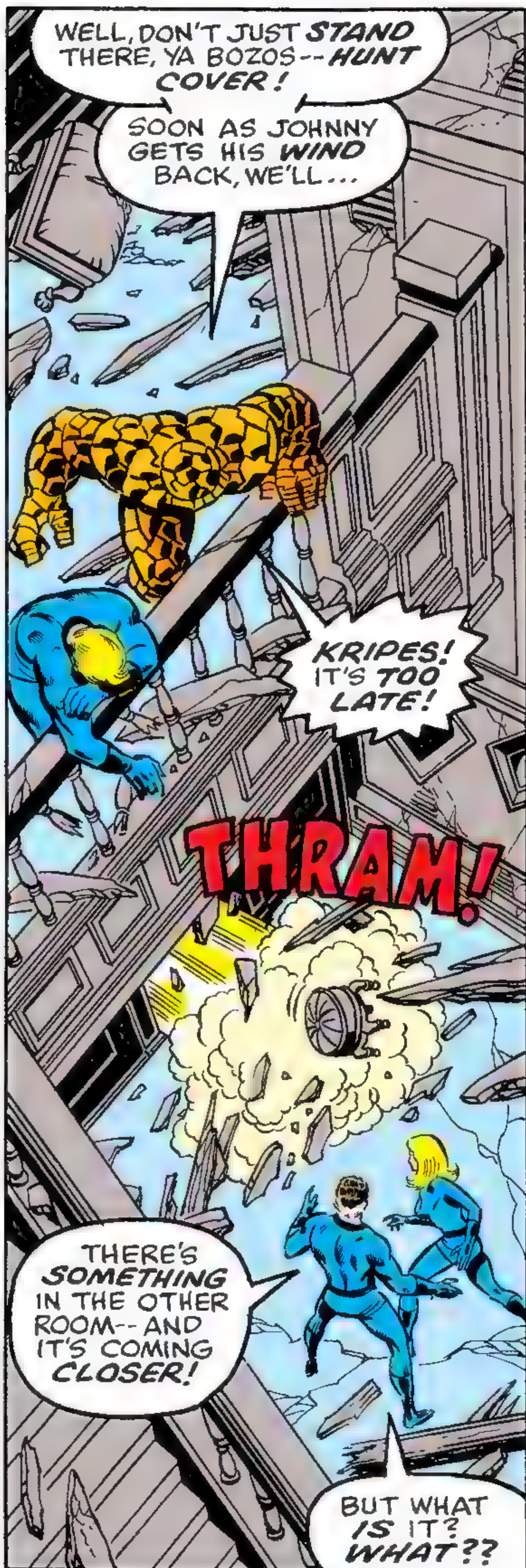
EASY, PAL. OL' BENJY'LL **HANDLE**...



WHAT?!?

THE **LIGHTS**-- SOMEONE HAS TURNED THEM **ON!!**

AND THE **FLOOR** HAS BEGUN TO TREMBLE AS IF A **HERD OF ELEPHANTS** WAS COMING THIS WAY!



WELL, DON'T JUST **STAND** THERE, YA **BOZOS**-- **HUNT COVER!**

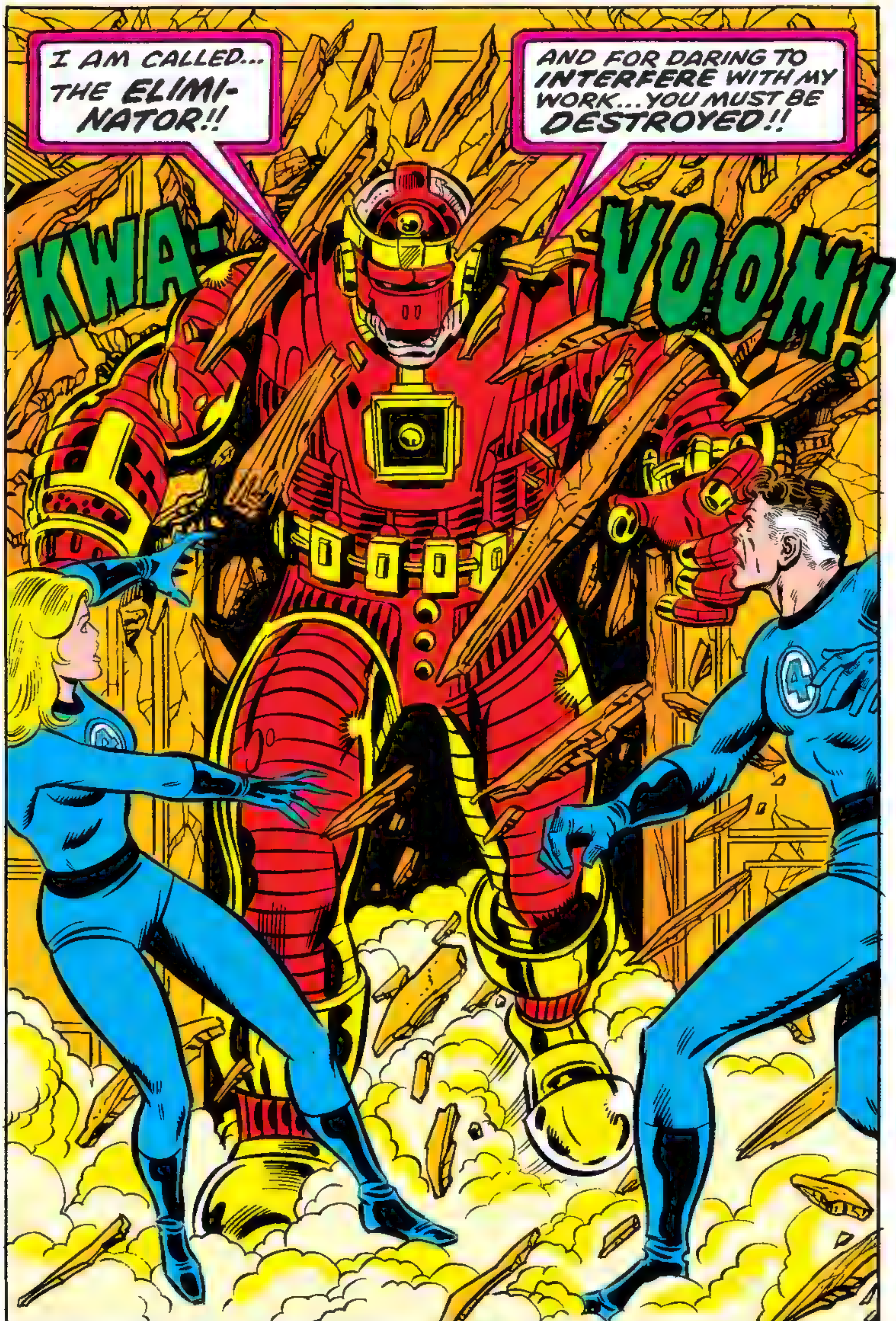
SOON AS **JOHNNY** GETS HIS **WIND** BACK, WE'LL...

KRIPES! IT'S TOO **LATE!**

THRAM!

THERE'S **SOMETHING** IN THE OTHER ROOM-- AND IT'S COMING **CLOSER!**

BUT WHAT **IS** IT? **WHAT??**

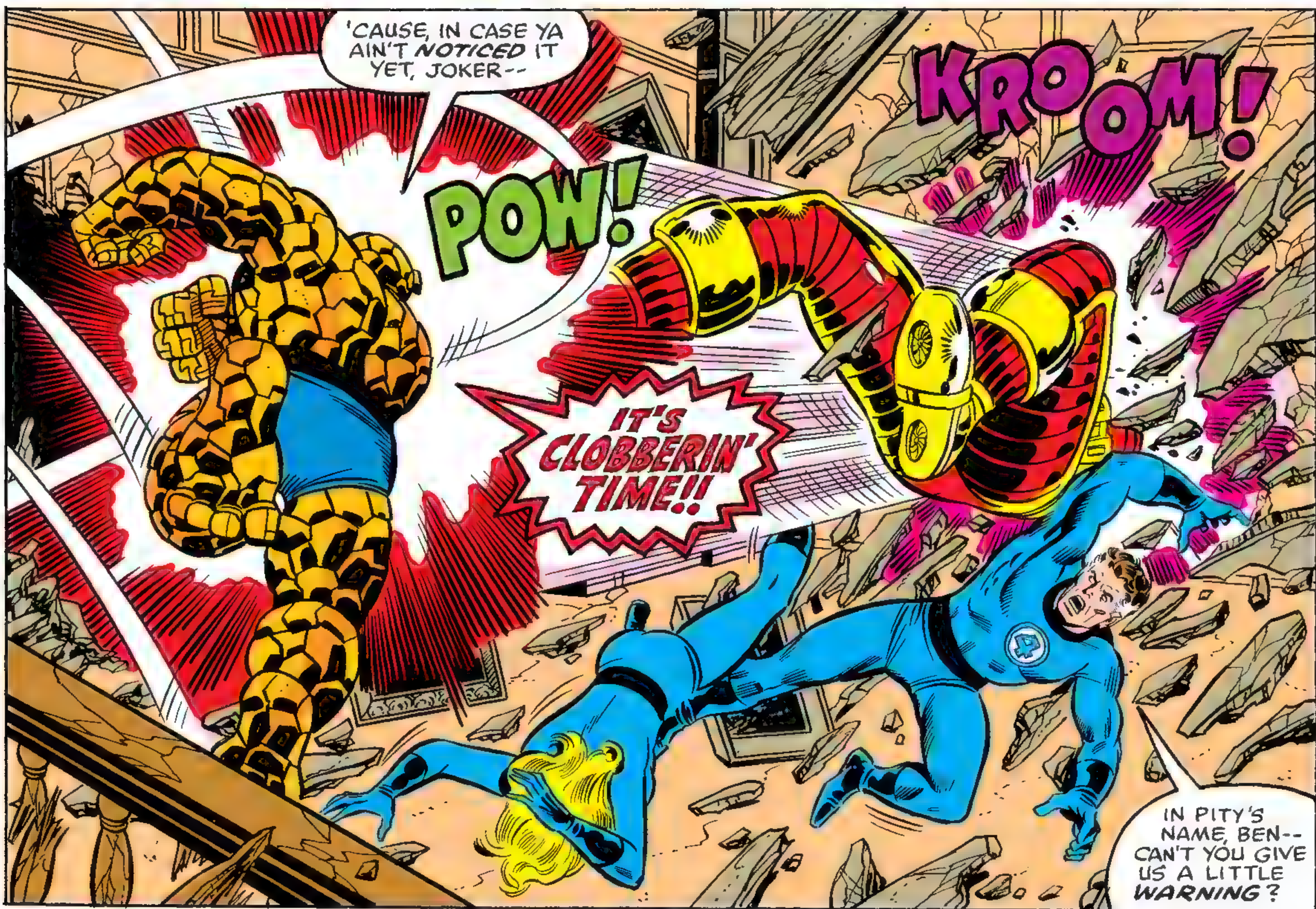
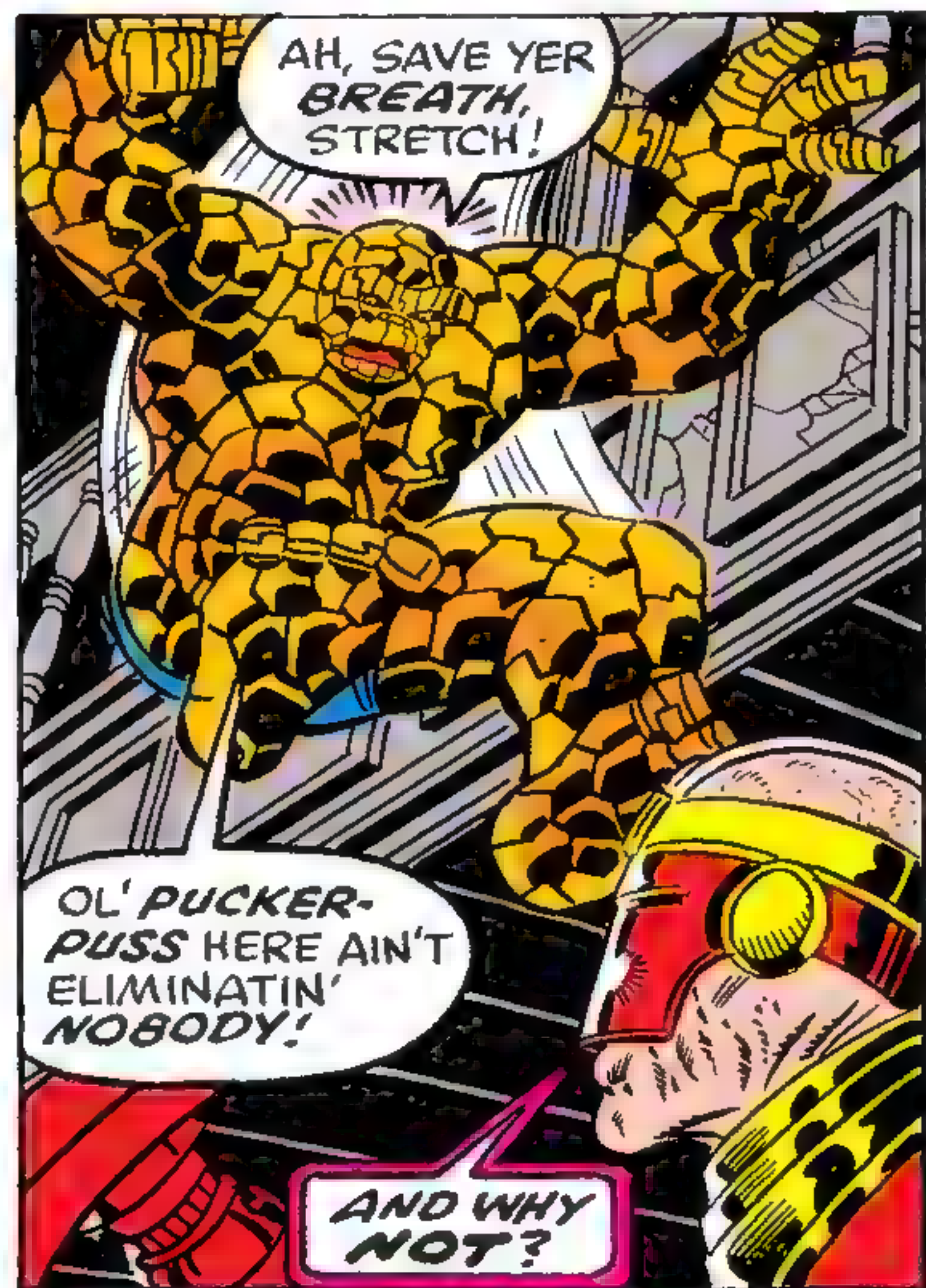
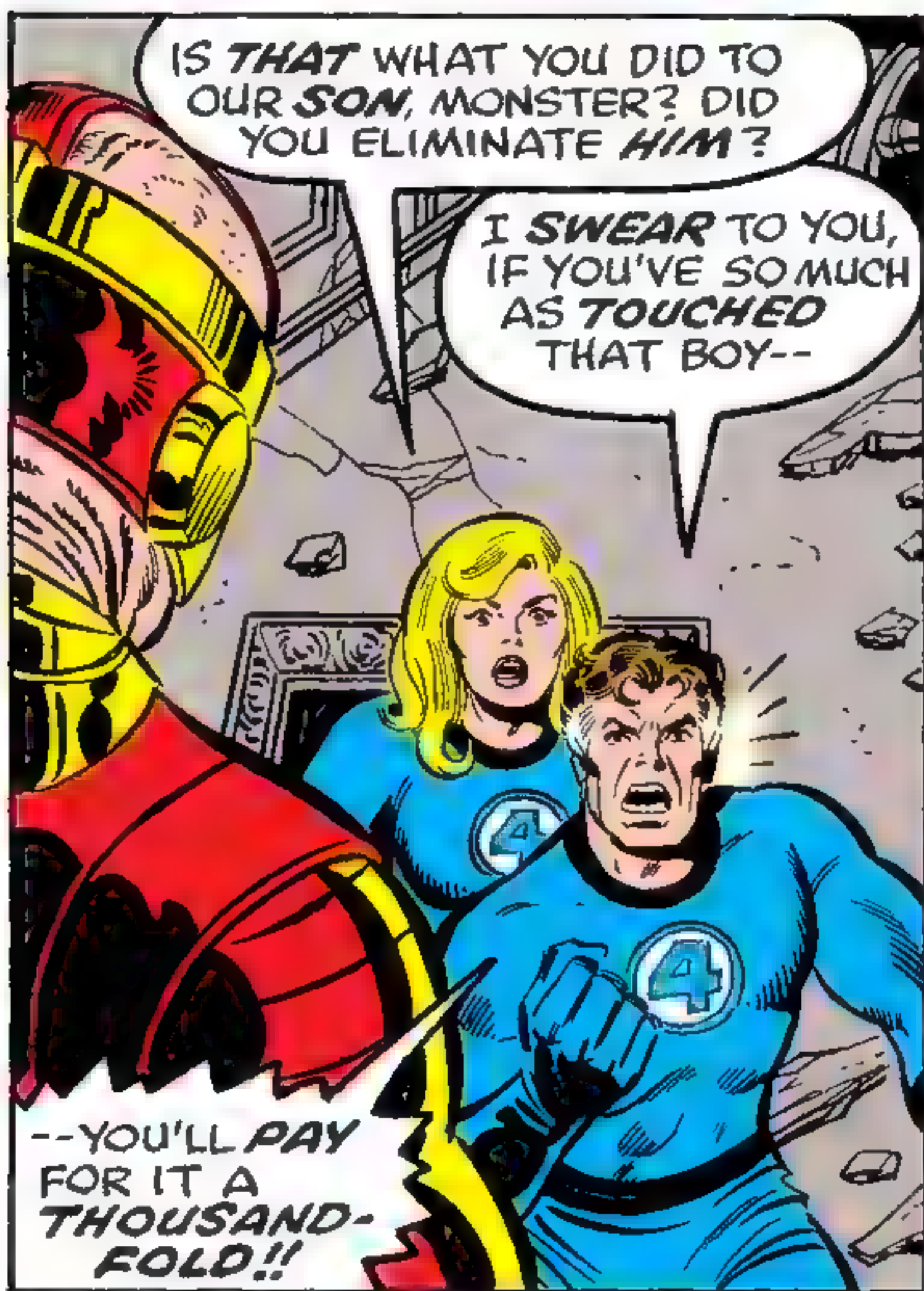
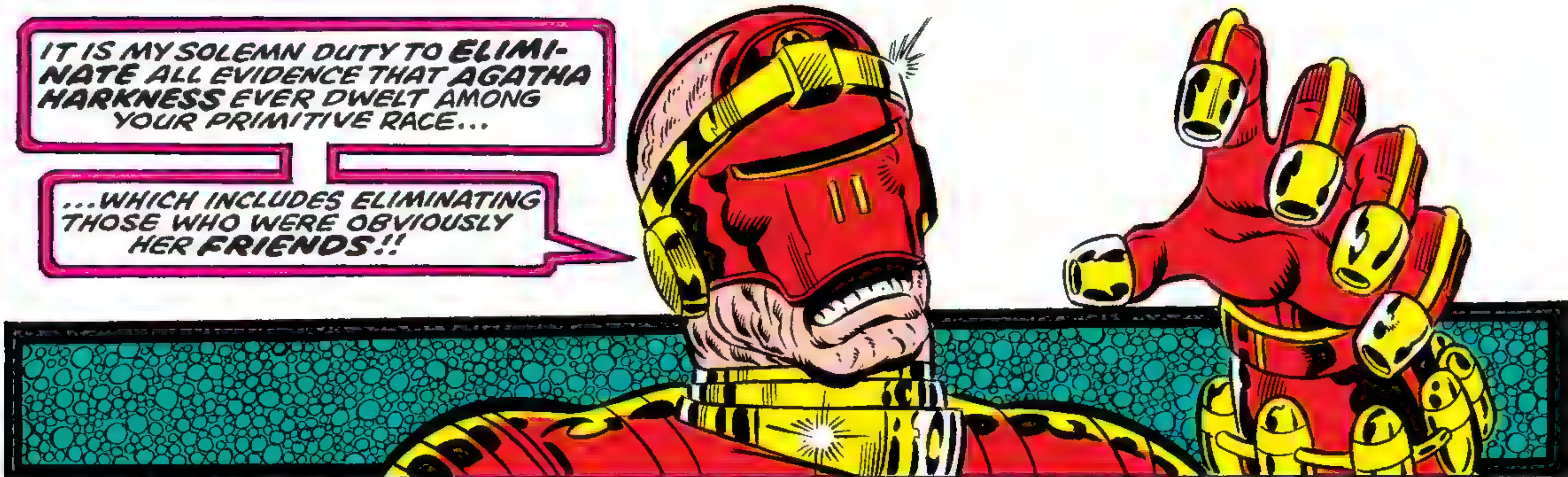


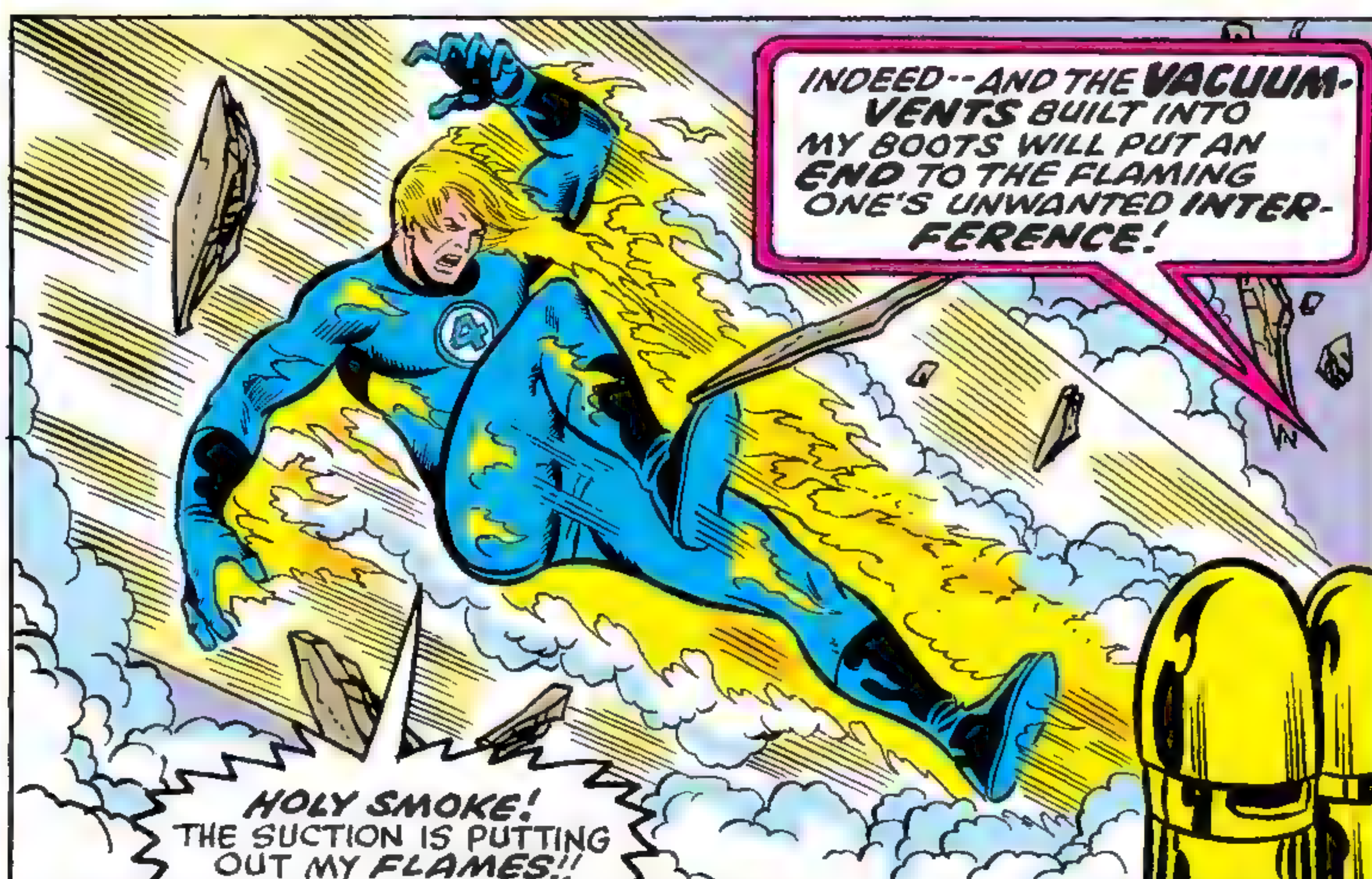
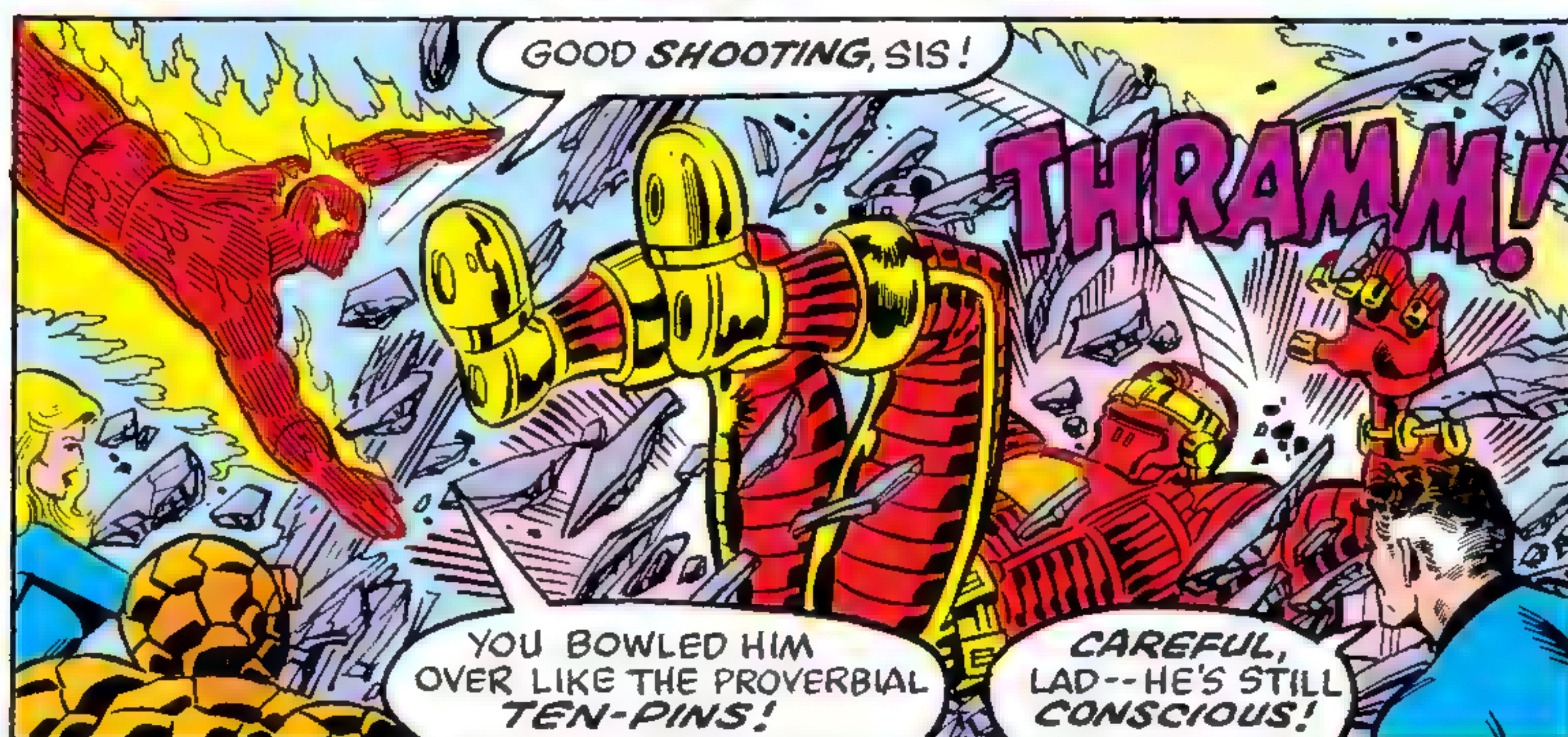
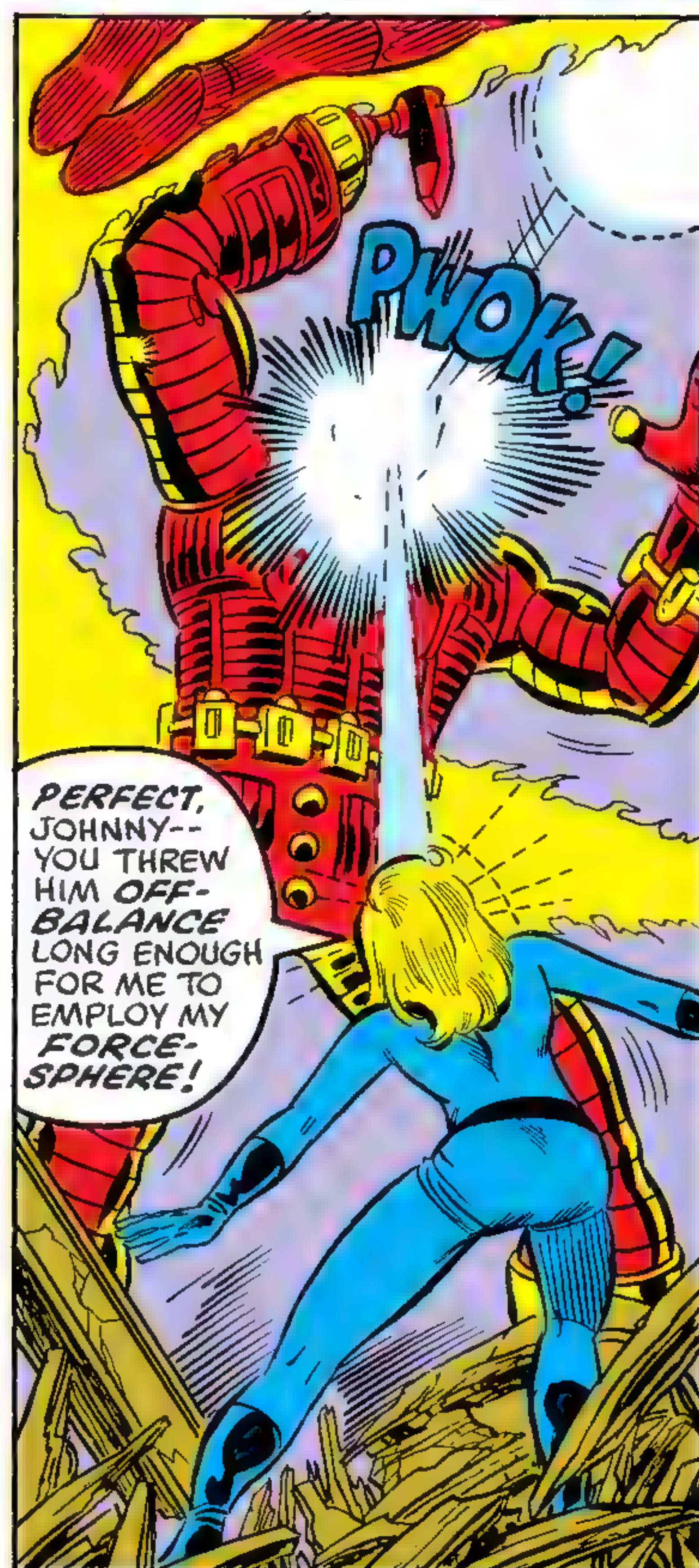
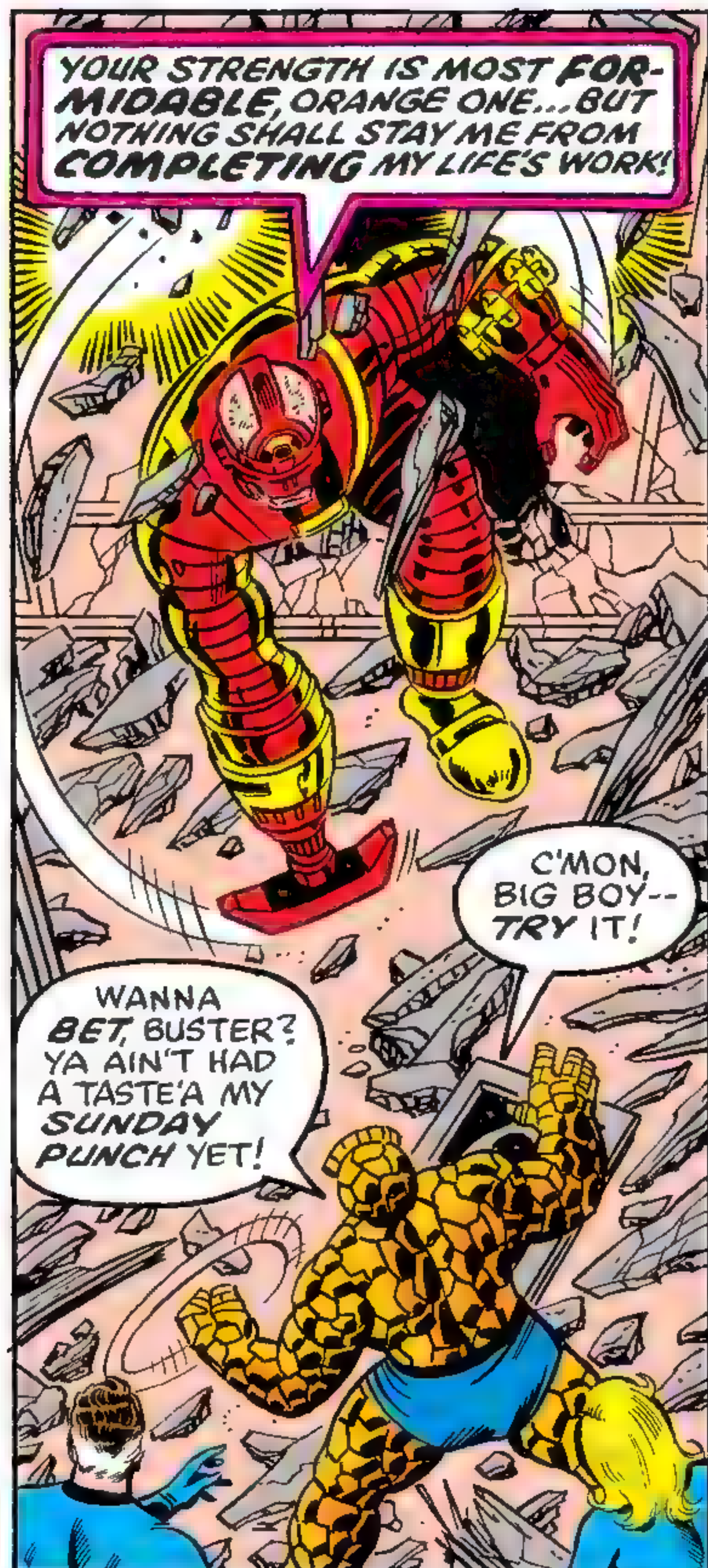
I AM CALLED... THE **ELIMI-NATOR!!**

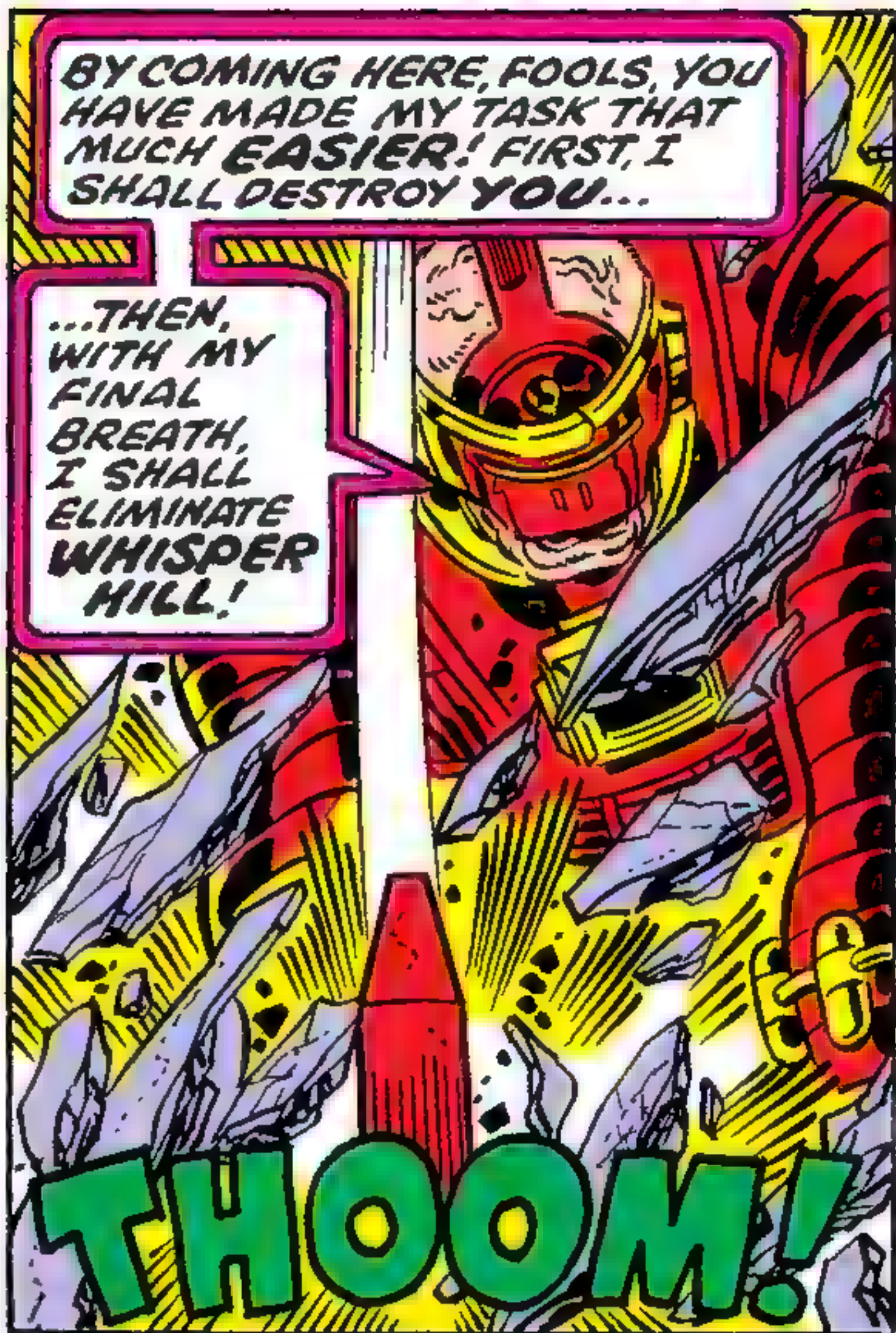
AND FOR DARING TO **INTERFERE** WITH MY WORK... YOU MUST BE **DESTROYED!!**

KWA--

VOOM!



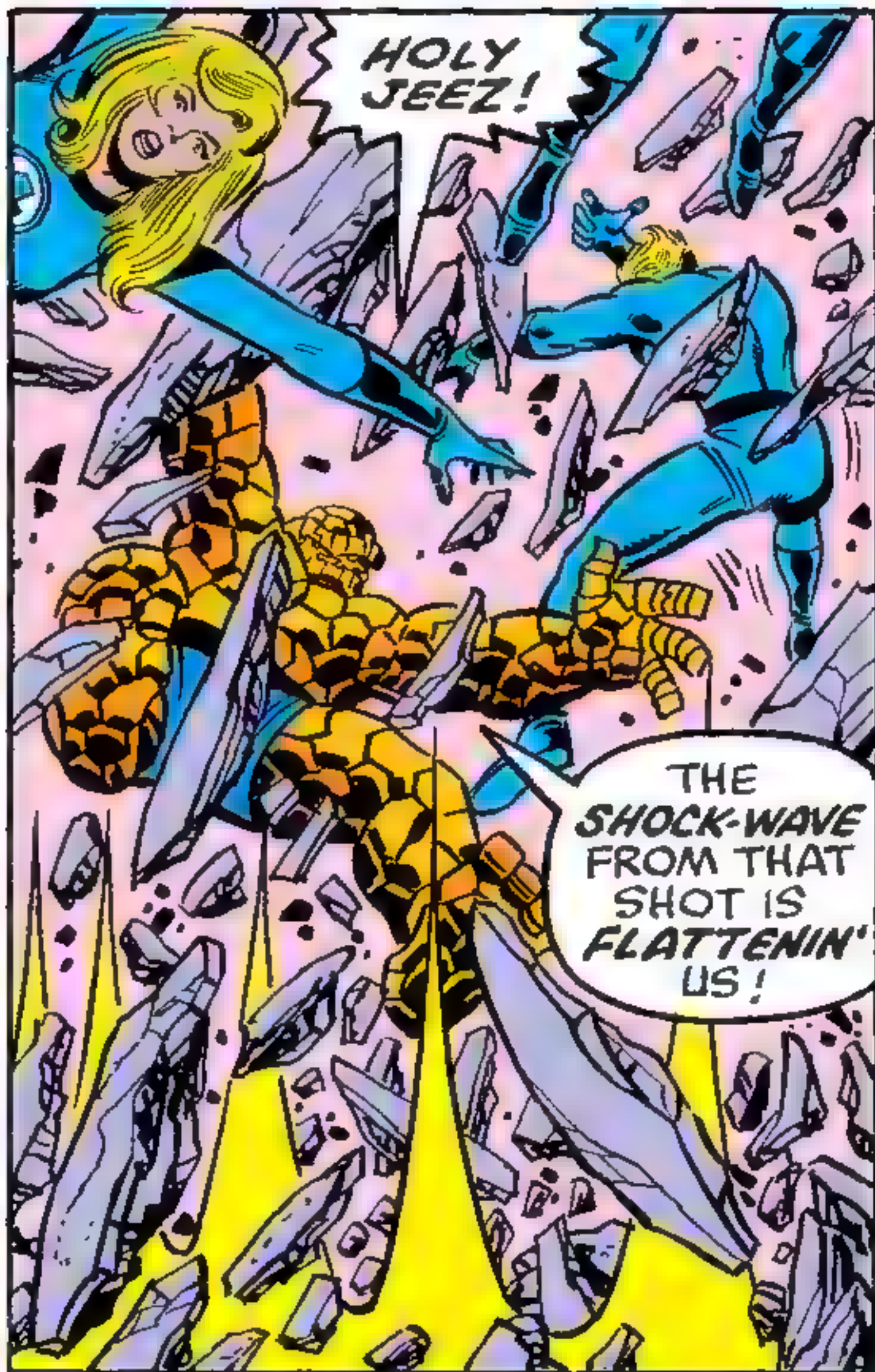




BY COMING HERE, FOOLS, YOU HAVE MADE MY TASK THAT MUCH EASIER! FIRST, I SHALL DESTROY YOU...

...THEN, WITH MY FINAL BREATH, I SHALL ELIMINATE WHISPER HILL!

THOOM!



HOLY JEEZ!

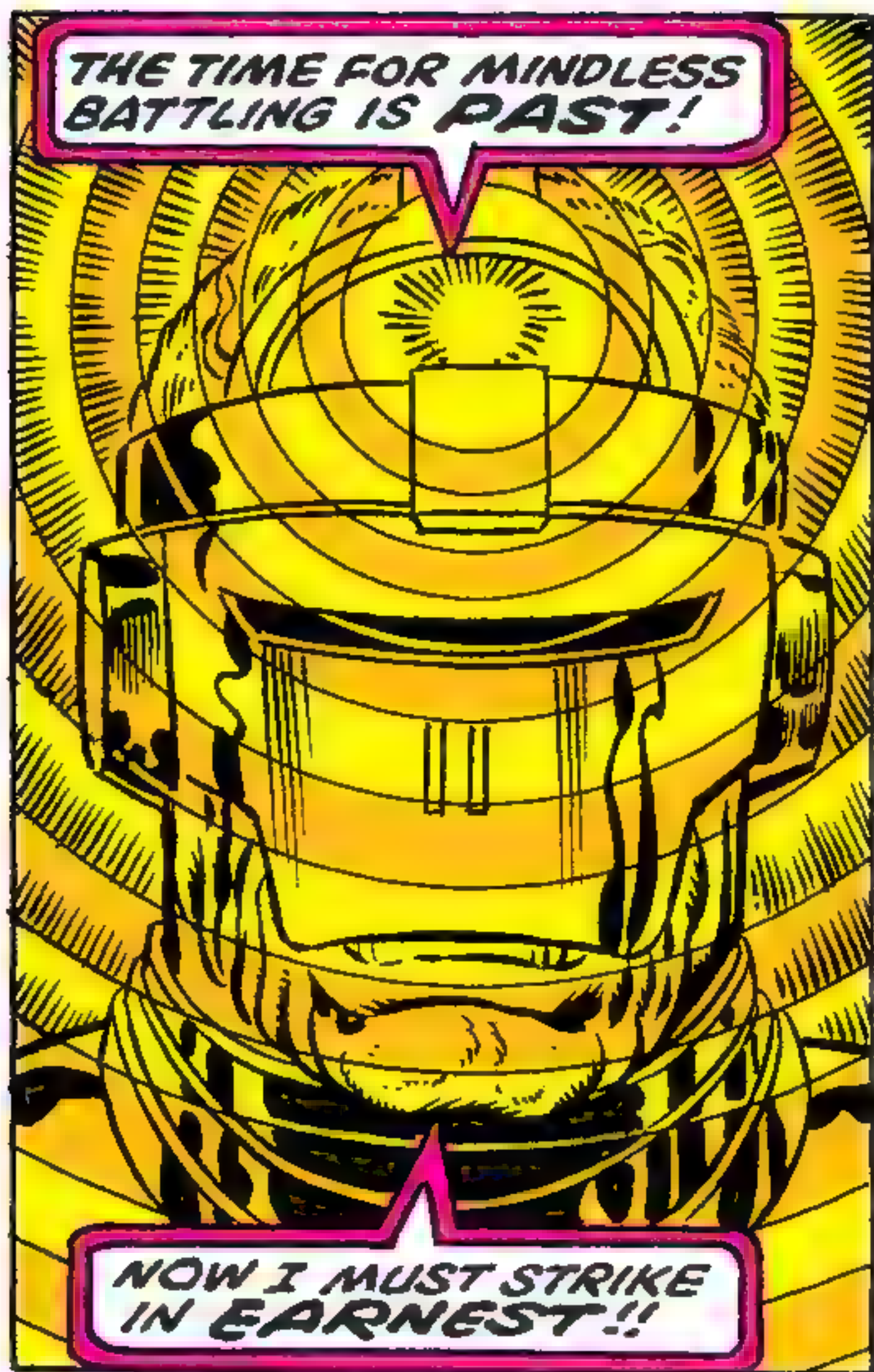
THE SHOCK-WAVE FROM THAT SHOT IS FLATTENIN' US!



HASSLIN' HIM IS LIKE TANGLIN' WITH A SECOND-STRING HULK!

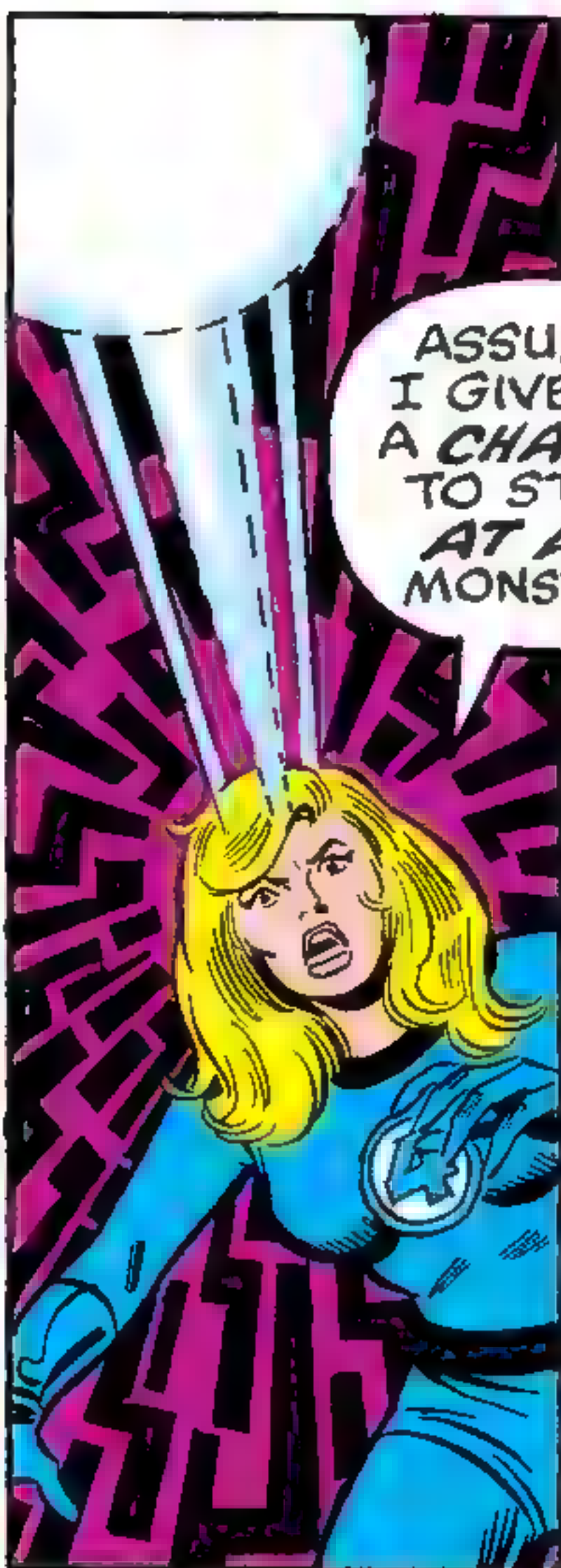
WE'LL NEED A PLAN IF WE EVER HOPE TO DEFEAT HIM--AND I THINK I'VE GOT ONE!

NOW ALL OF YOU, LISTEN TO ME CLOSELY...

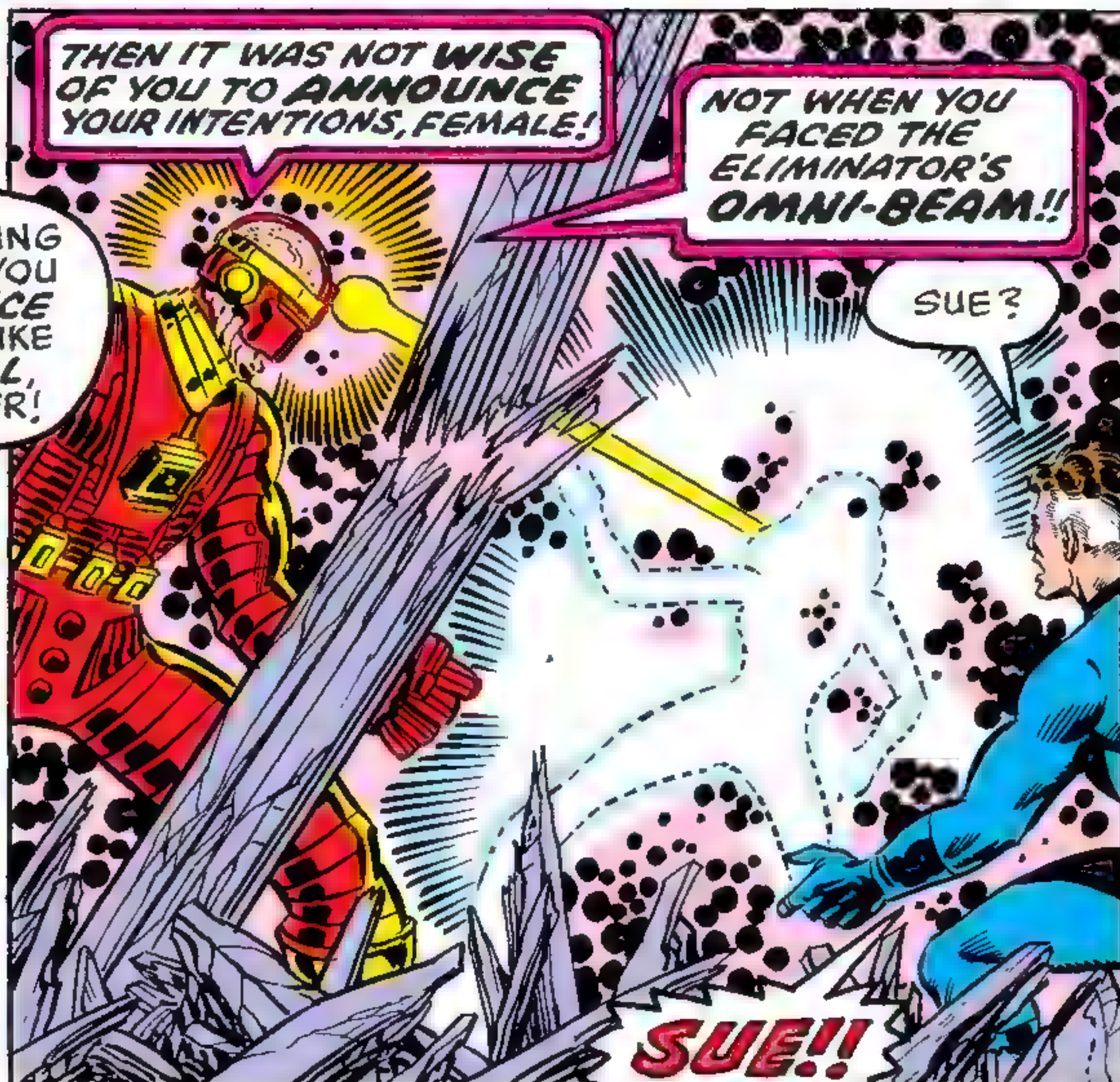


THE TIME FOR MINDLESS BATTLING IS PAST!

NOW I MUST STRIKE IN EARNEST!!



ASSUMING I GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO STRIKE AT ALL, MONSTER!



THEN IT WAS NOT WISE OF YOU TO ANNOUNCE YOUR INTENTIONS, FEMALE!

NOT WHEN YOU FACED THE ELIMINATOR'S OMNI-BEAM!!

SUE?

SUE!!



REED, WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?

SH-SHE'S... GONE, BEN!

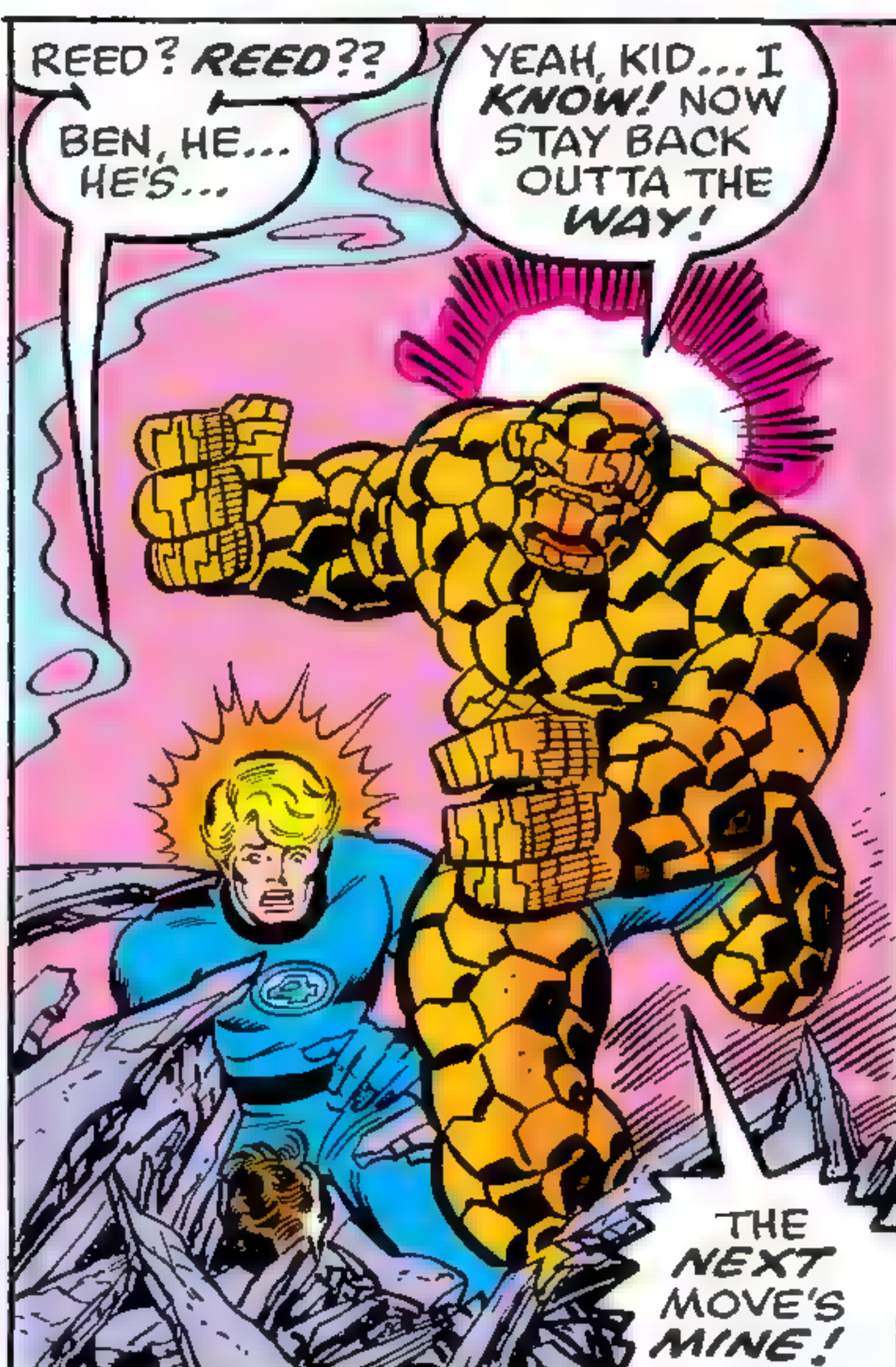
THAT CREATURE'S BEAM DISINTEGRATED HER!



HOWLING IN ALMOST-MINDLESS RAGE, REED RICHARDS HURLS HIMSELF AT THE EMOTIONLESS ALIEN ASSASSIN...

HE ALMOST REACHES HIM.

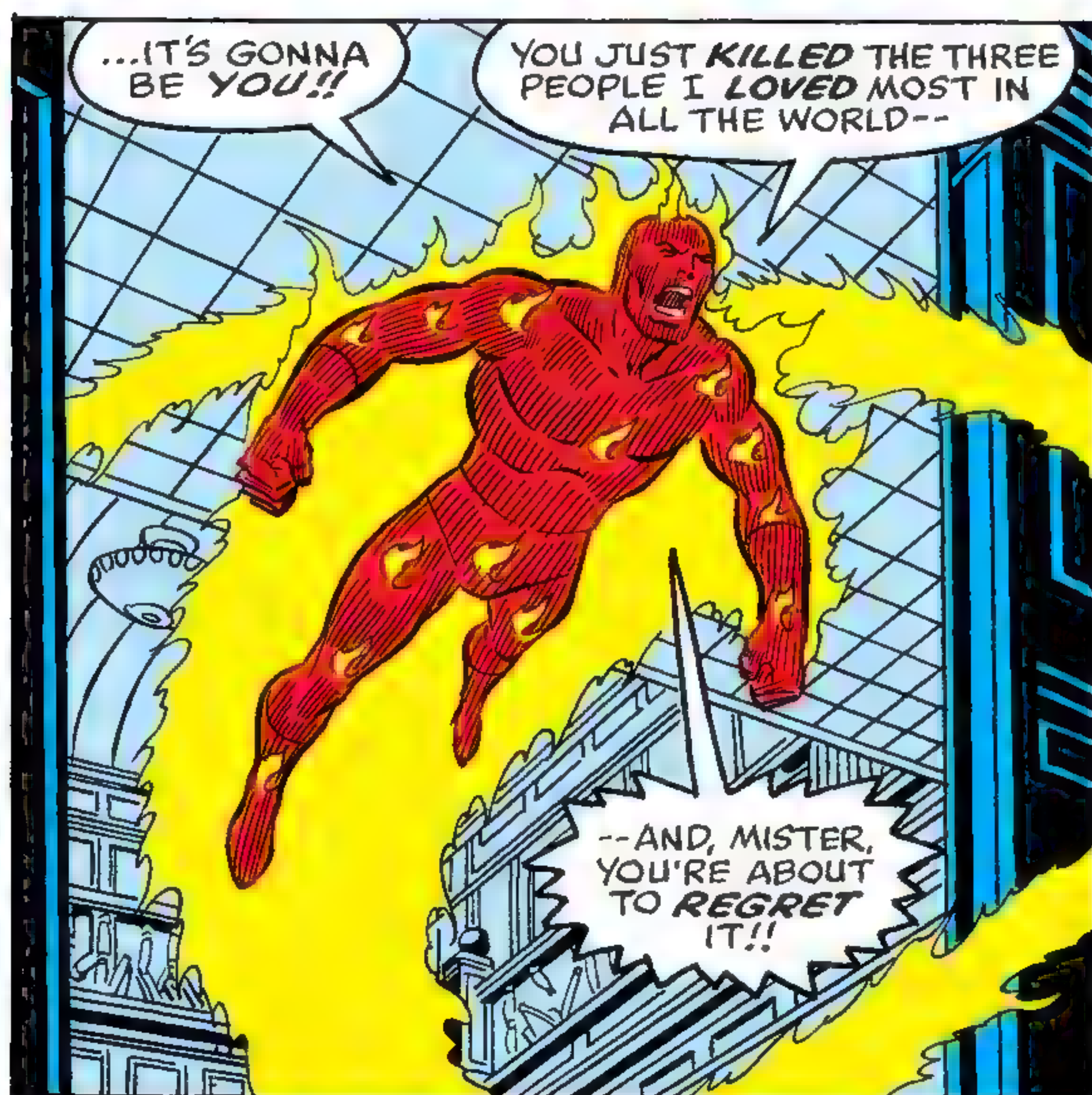
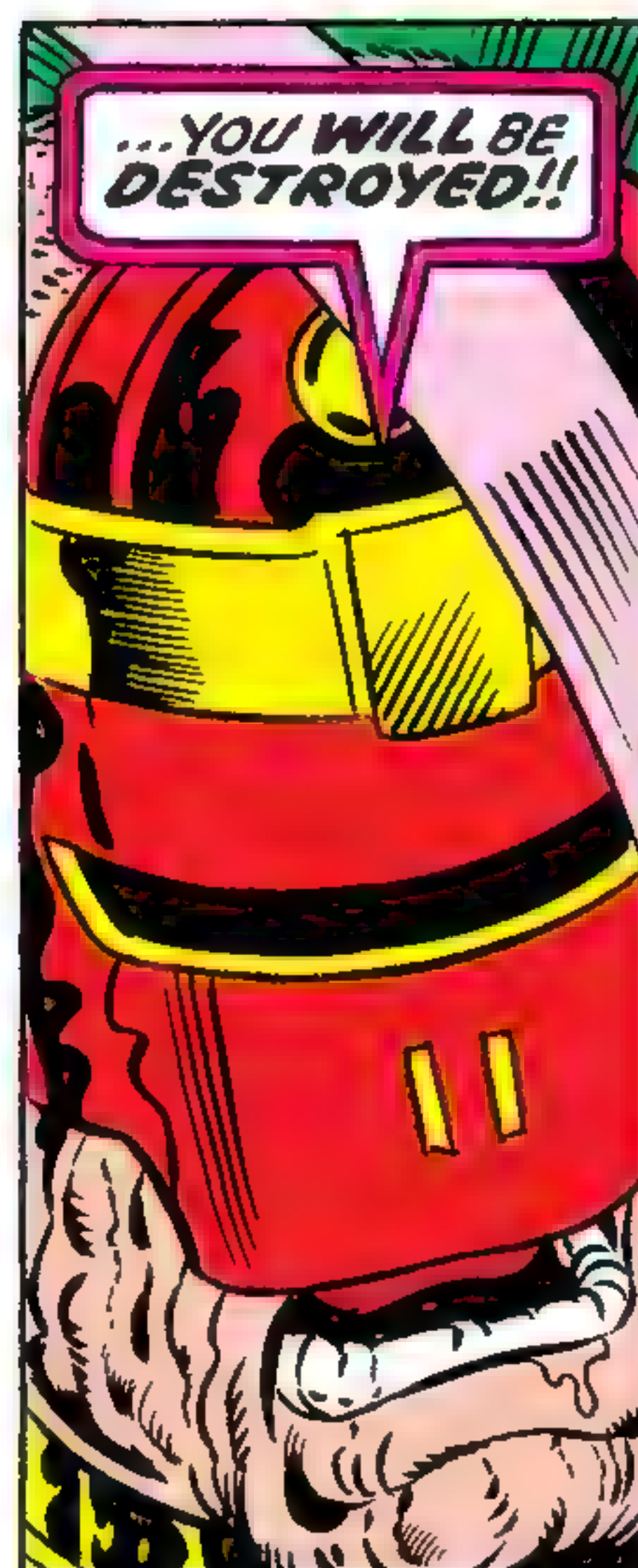
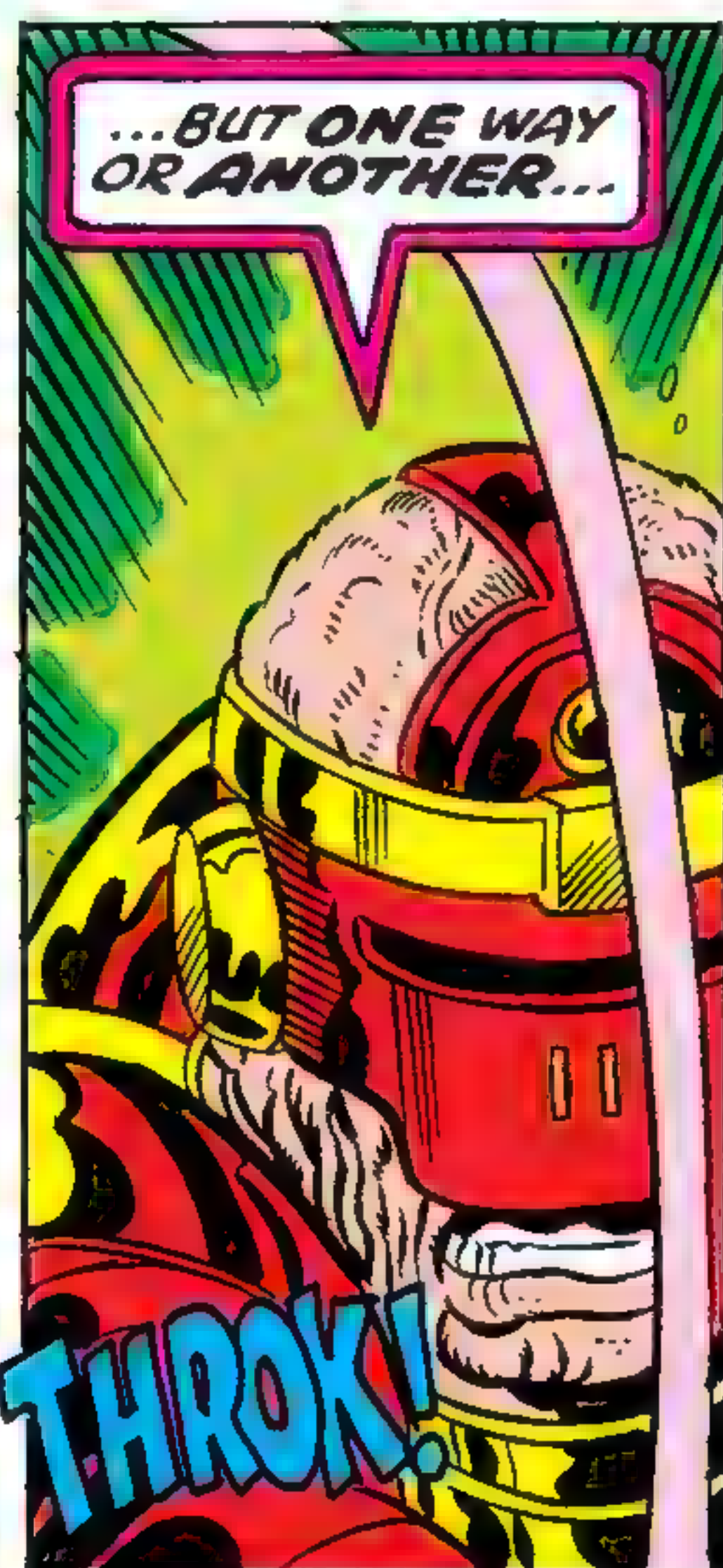
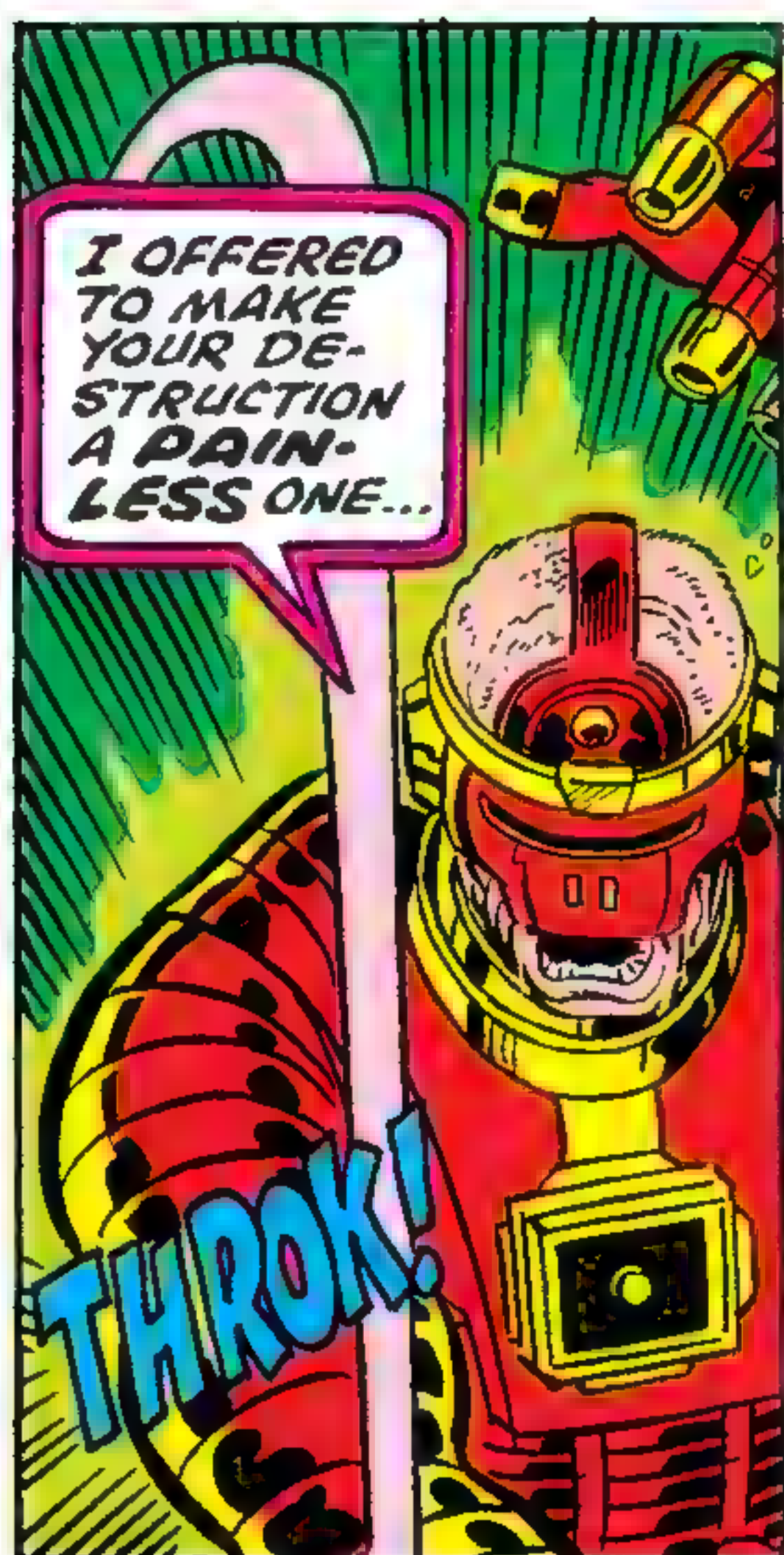
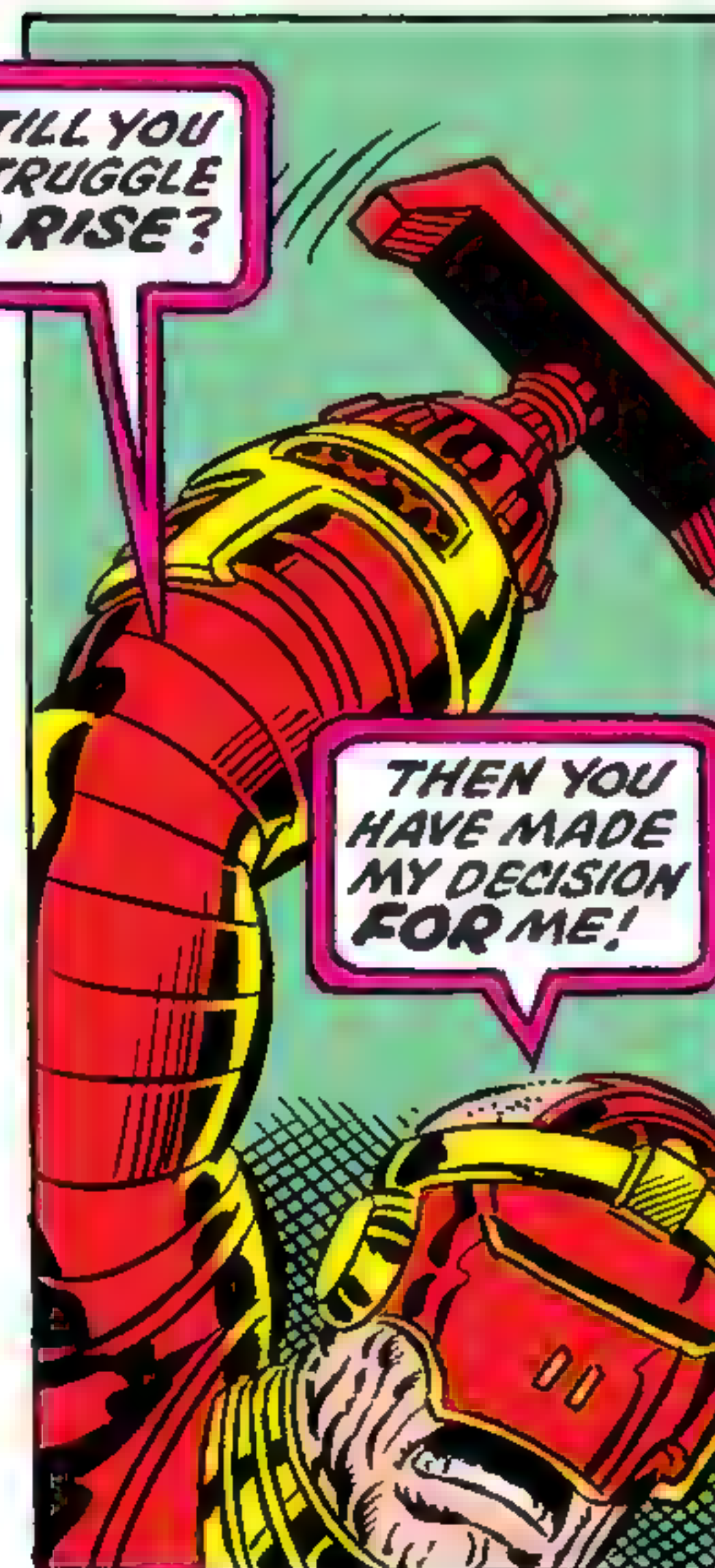
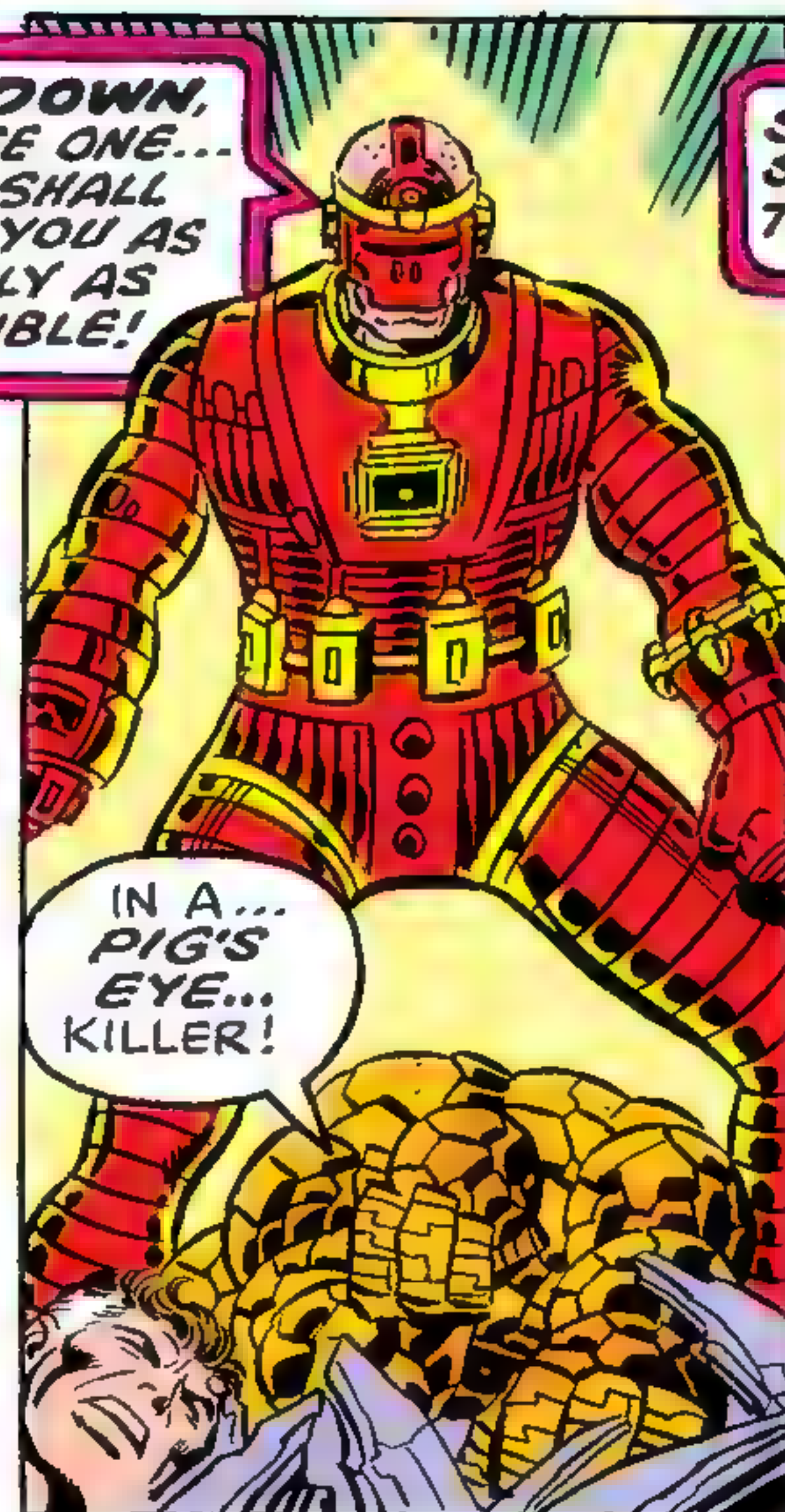
AARRGGHH!!



REED? REED?? BEN, HE... HE'S...

YEAH, KID... I KNOW! NOW STAY BACK OUTTA THE WAY!

THE NEXT MOVE'S MINE!

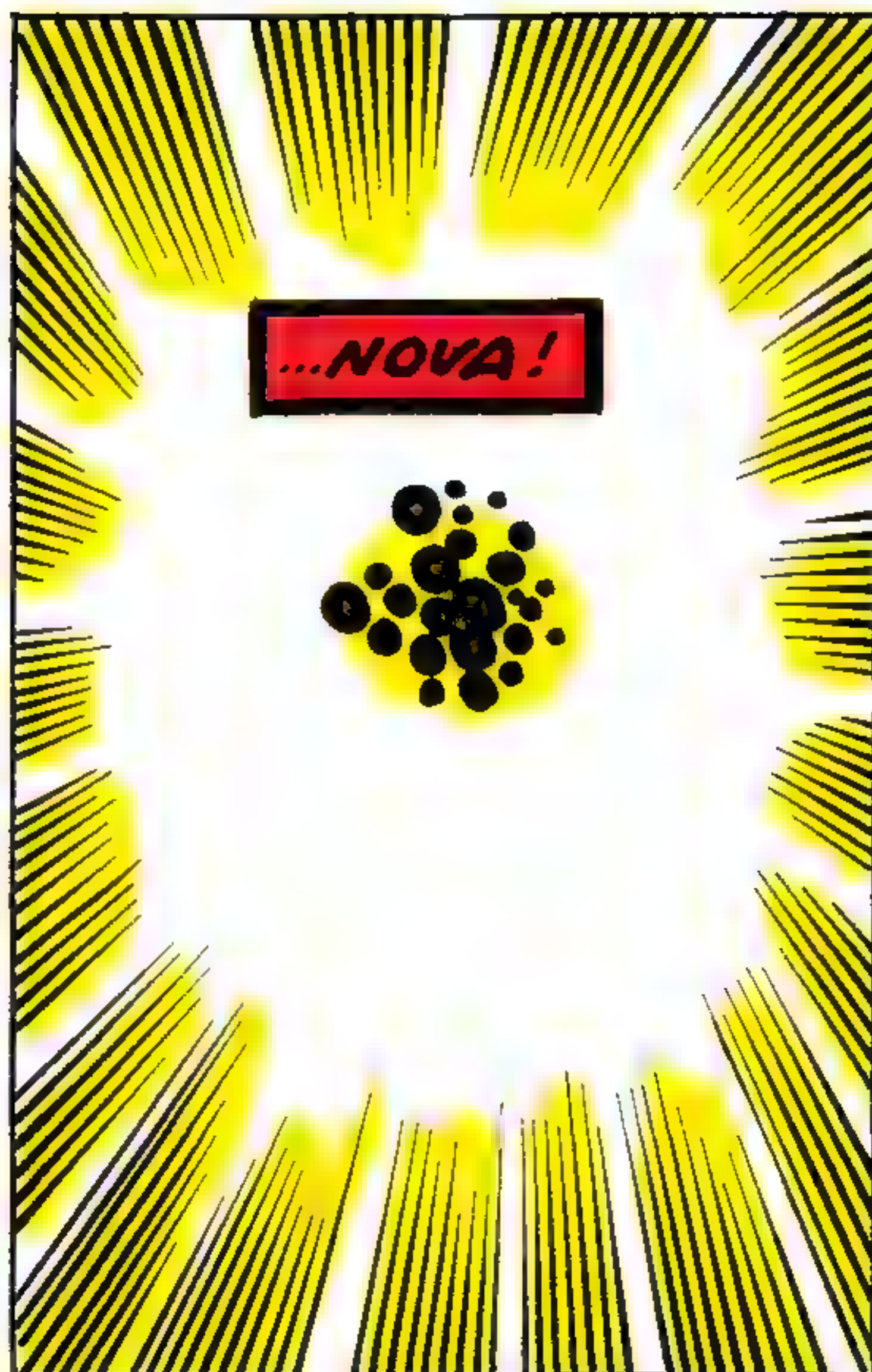




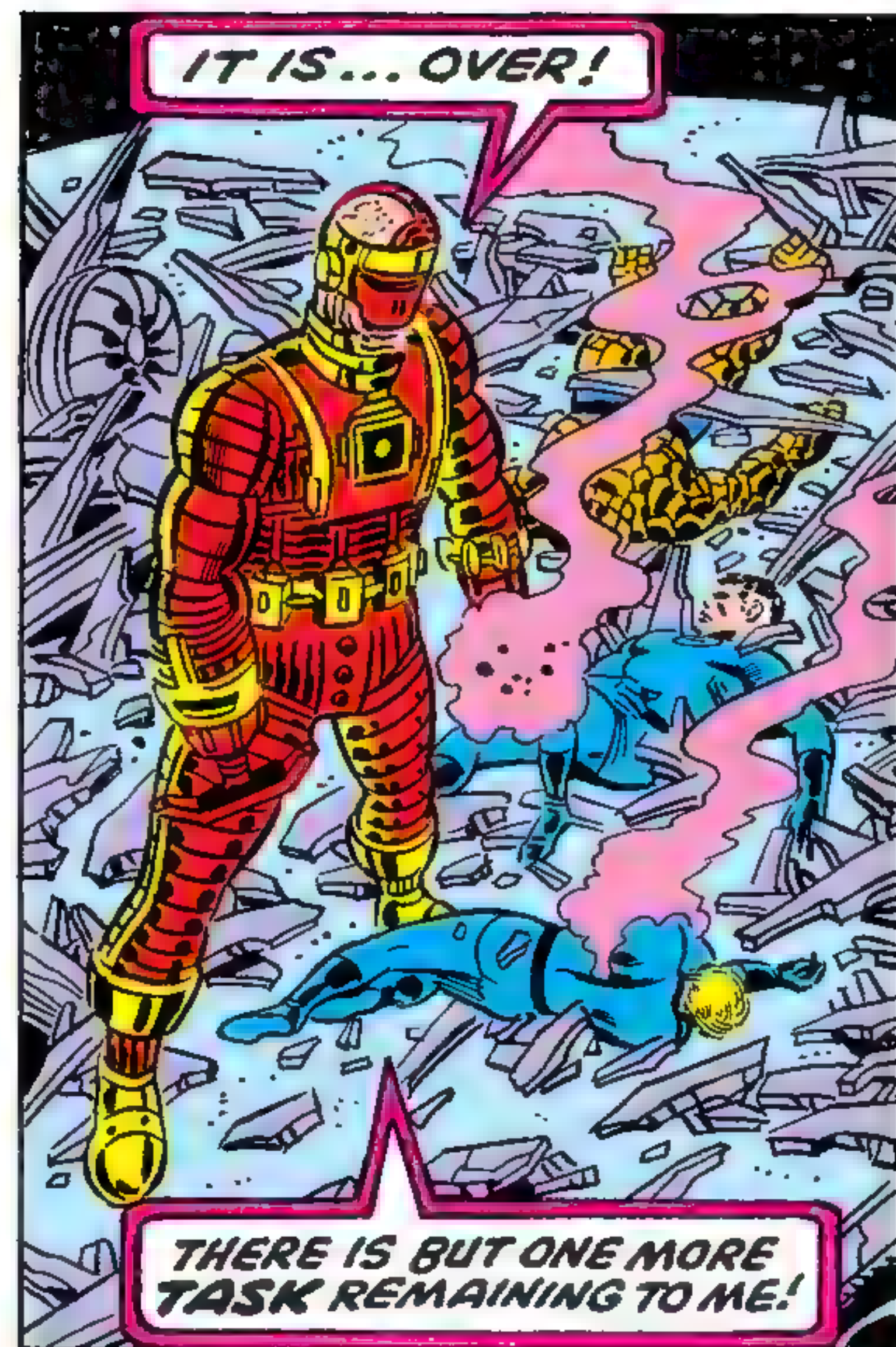
NO! HE'S **MAGNIFIED** MY FLAME BEYOND MY OWN POWER TO **CONTROL** IT!

I'M **OVER-HEATING... BURNING UP...**

GOT TO **DO** SOMETHING... BEFORE I GO...

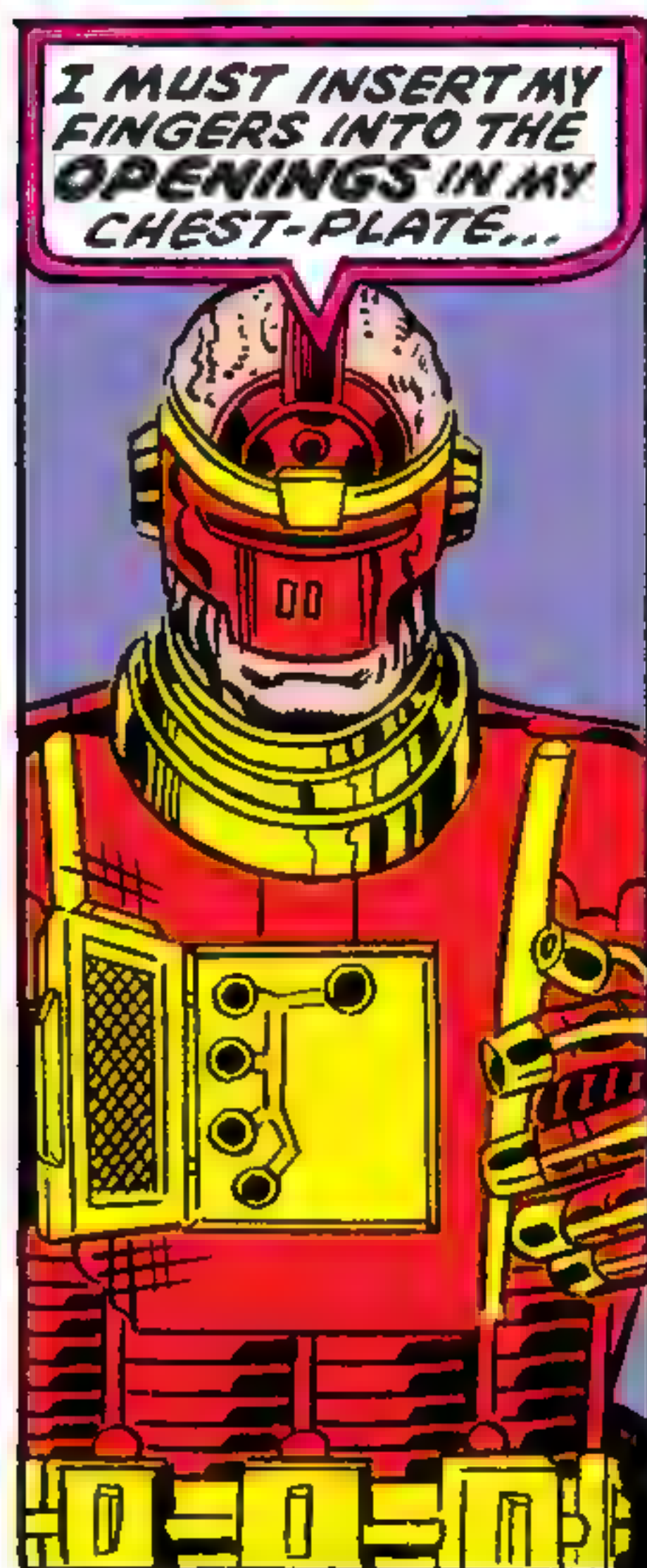


...NOVA!



IT IS... OVER!

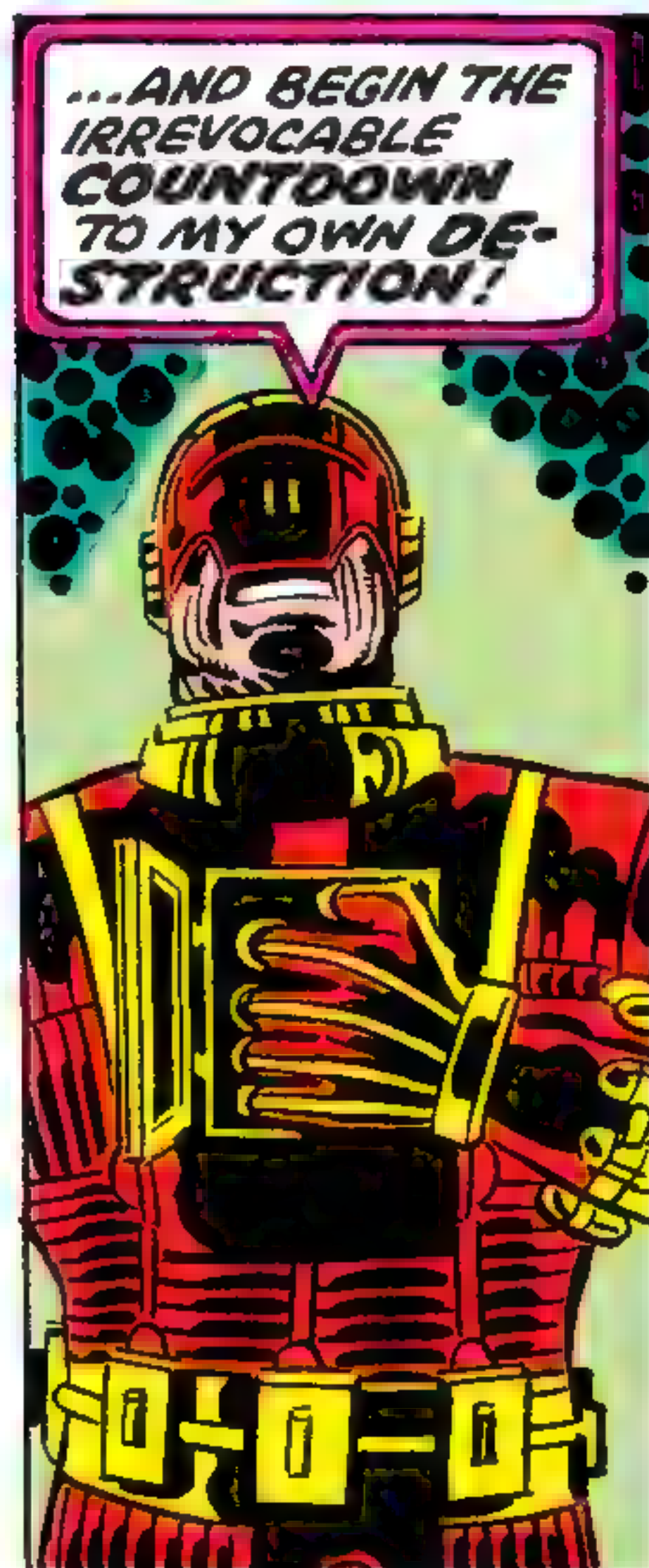
THERE IS BUT ONE MORE **TASK** REMAINING TO ME!



I MUST **INSERT** MY FINGERS INTO THE **OPENINGS** IN MY **CHEST-PLATE...**



...THEN **TRIGGER** MY **INCENDIARY-JETS...**



...AND **BEGIN** THE **IRREVOCABLE** **COUNTDOWN** TO MY OWN **DE-STRUCTION!**



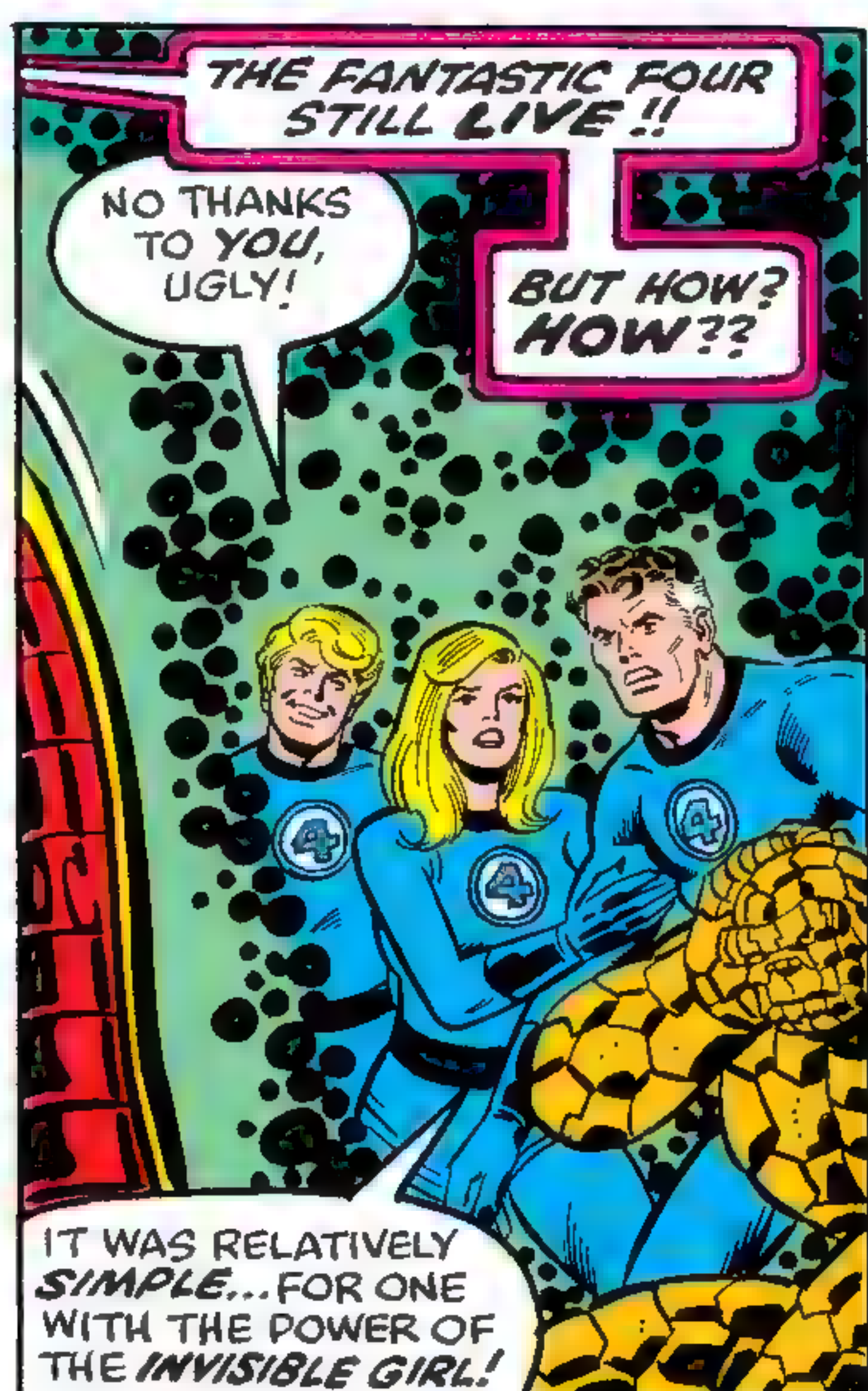
WITHIN **MOMENTS** I SHALL **EXPLODE**, **DESTROYING** **WHISPER HILL!**

MY **VACUUM-VENTS** **ANCHOR** ME TO THE **FLOOR** NOW... THE **PROCESS** **CANNOT** BE **REVERSED...** AND **SOON...**



THAT'S ALL WE **WANTED** TO **KNOW!**

NO! IT IS **NOT POSSIBLE...**



THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** **STILL LIVE!!**

NO THANKS TO YOU, **UGLY!**

BUT **HOW?** **HOW??**

IT WAS **RELATIVELY SIMPLE...** FOR ONE WITH THE **POWER** OF THE **INVISIBLE GIRL!**



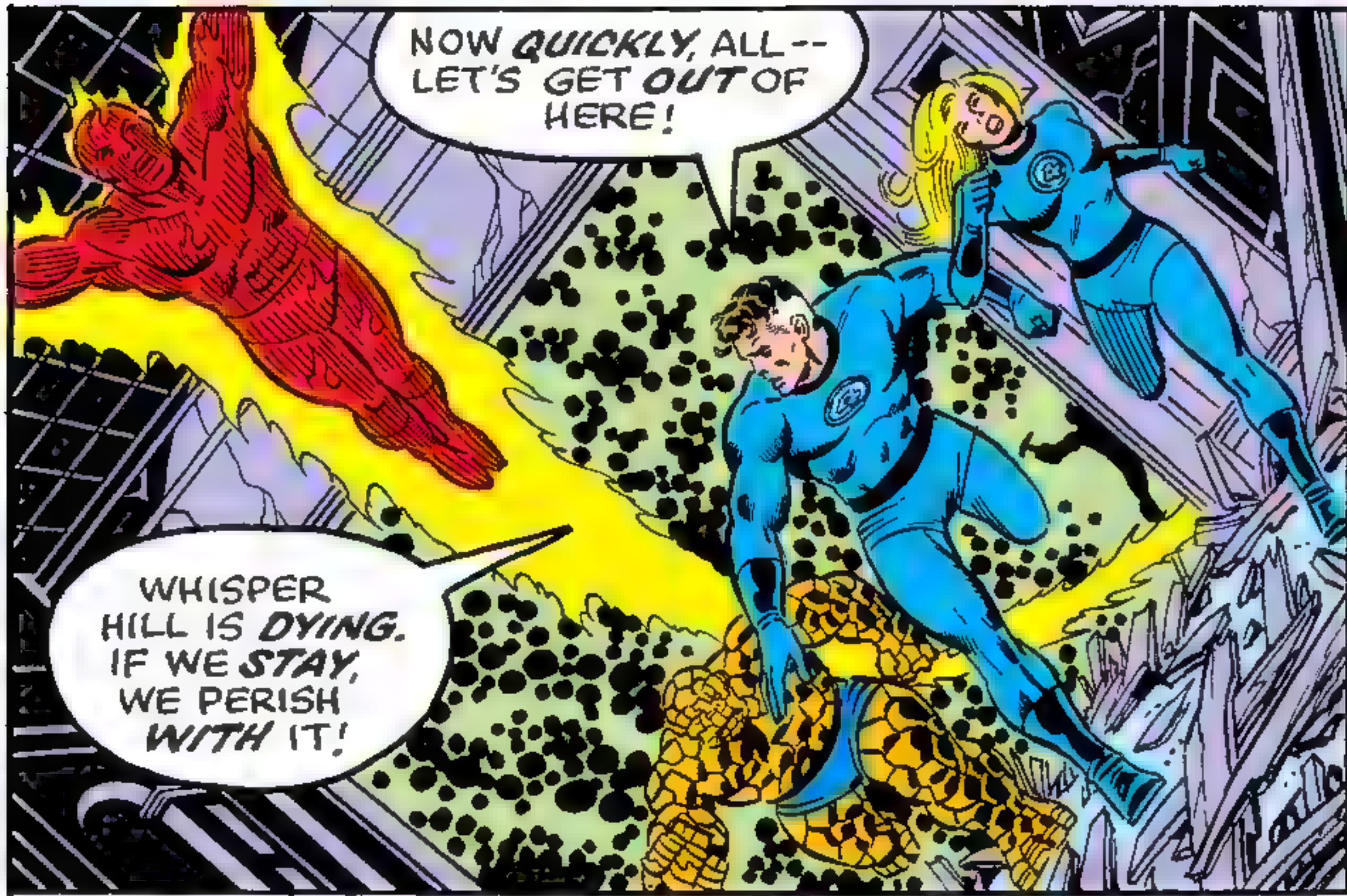
"SUE USED HER **INVISIBLE** **FORCE-SHIELD** TO **PROTECT** HERSELF FROM YOUR **OMNI-BEAM**--THEN TURNED **HERSELF** **INVISIBLE** BEFORE THE **BLINDING FLASH** **FADED.**"



SHE WAS **HIDING** IN THE **SHADOWS**, USING HER **FORCE-SHIELD** TO **PROTECT** **BEN** AND **ME** FROM YOUR **ATTACK** AS WELL!

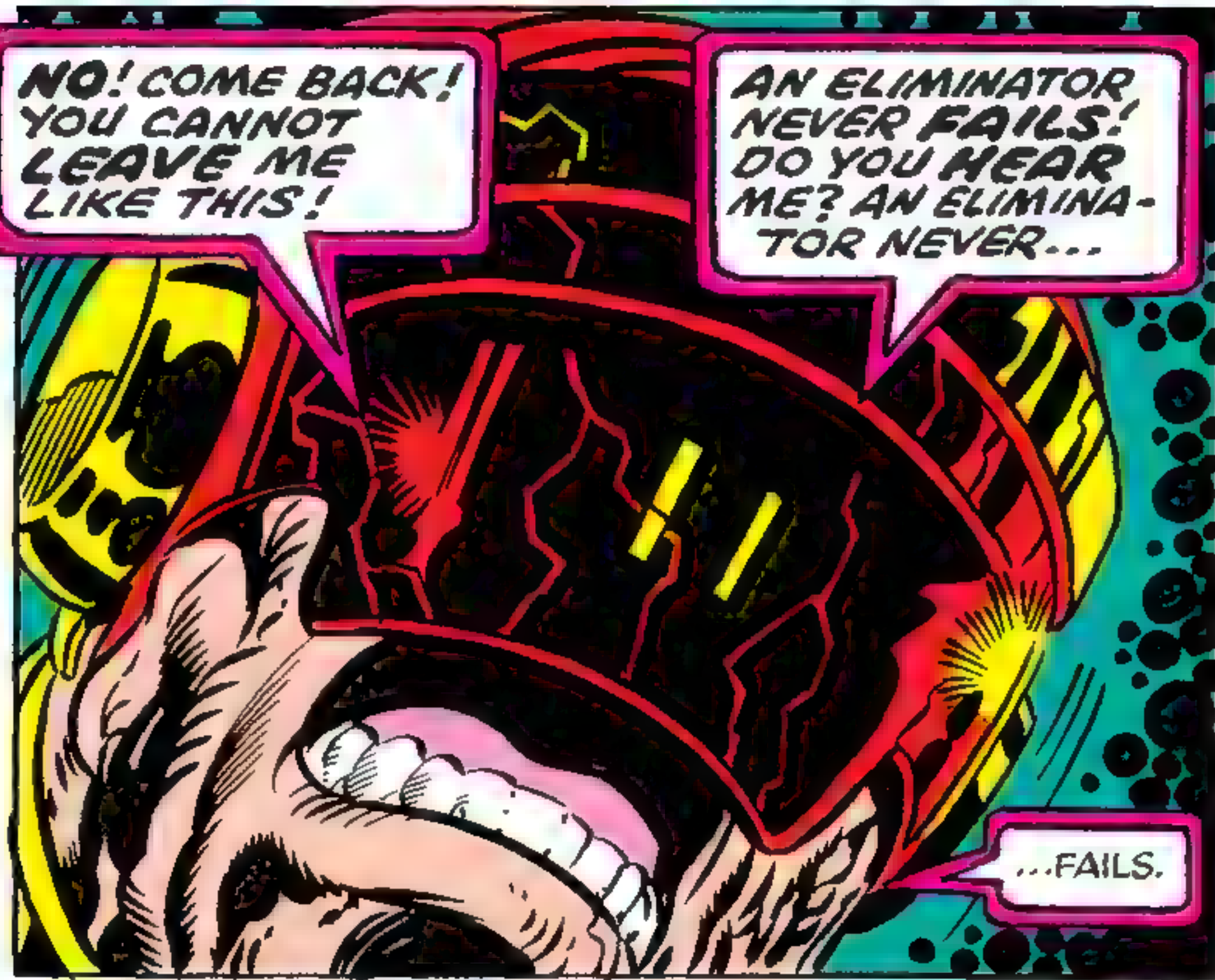
JOHNNY **FAKED** HIS **GOING NOVA** BEFORE YOU COULD **ACTUALLY** **HARM** HIM!

AS YOU SAID, **ELIMINATOR**, IT'S **OVER...** AND YOU'VE **LOST!**



NOW QUICKLY, ALL--
LET'S GET OUT OF
HERE!

WHISPER
HILL IS DYING.
IF WE STAY,
WE PERISH
WITH IT!



NO! COME BACK!
YOU CANNOT
LEAVE ME
LIKE THIS!

AN ELIMINATOR
NEVER FAILS!
DO YOU HEAR
ME? AN ELIMINA-
TOR NEVER...

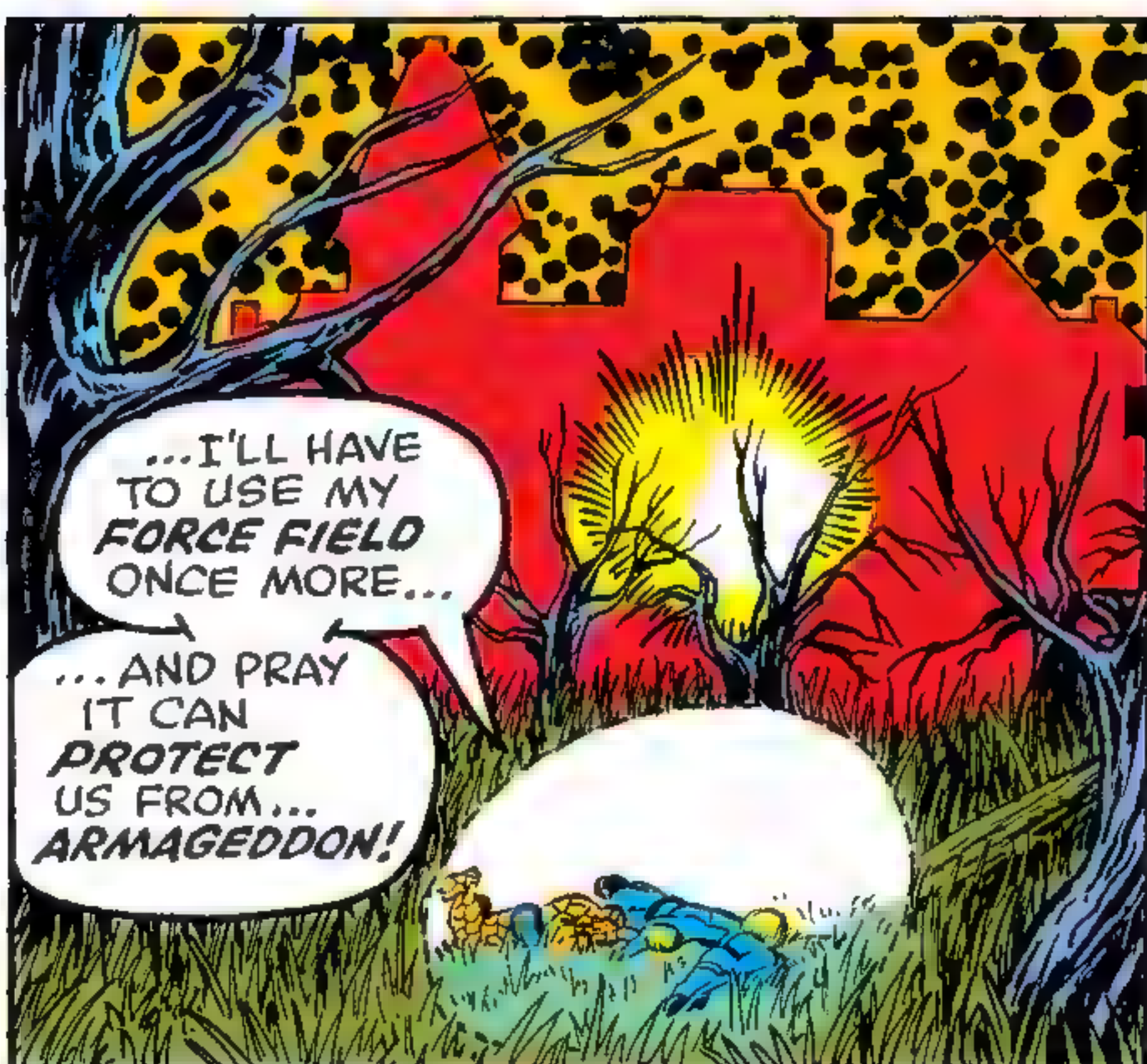
...FAILS.



FEET, DON'T
FAIL ME NOW!

IT'S NO
GOOD! WE'LL
NEVER GET FAR
ENOUGH IN
TIME!

TO ME,
ALL OF
YOU...



...I'LL HAVE
TO USE MY
FORCE FIELD
ONCE MORE...

...AND PRAY
IT CAN
PROTECT
US FROM...
ARMAGEDDON!



WELL, YER TIMIN'S JUST
ABOUT PERFECT,
SUZIE! FROM THE WAY
THAT OL' HOUSE IS
SMOKIN'...

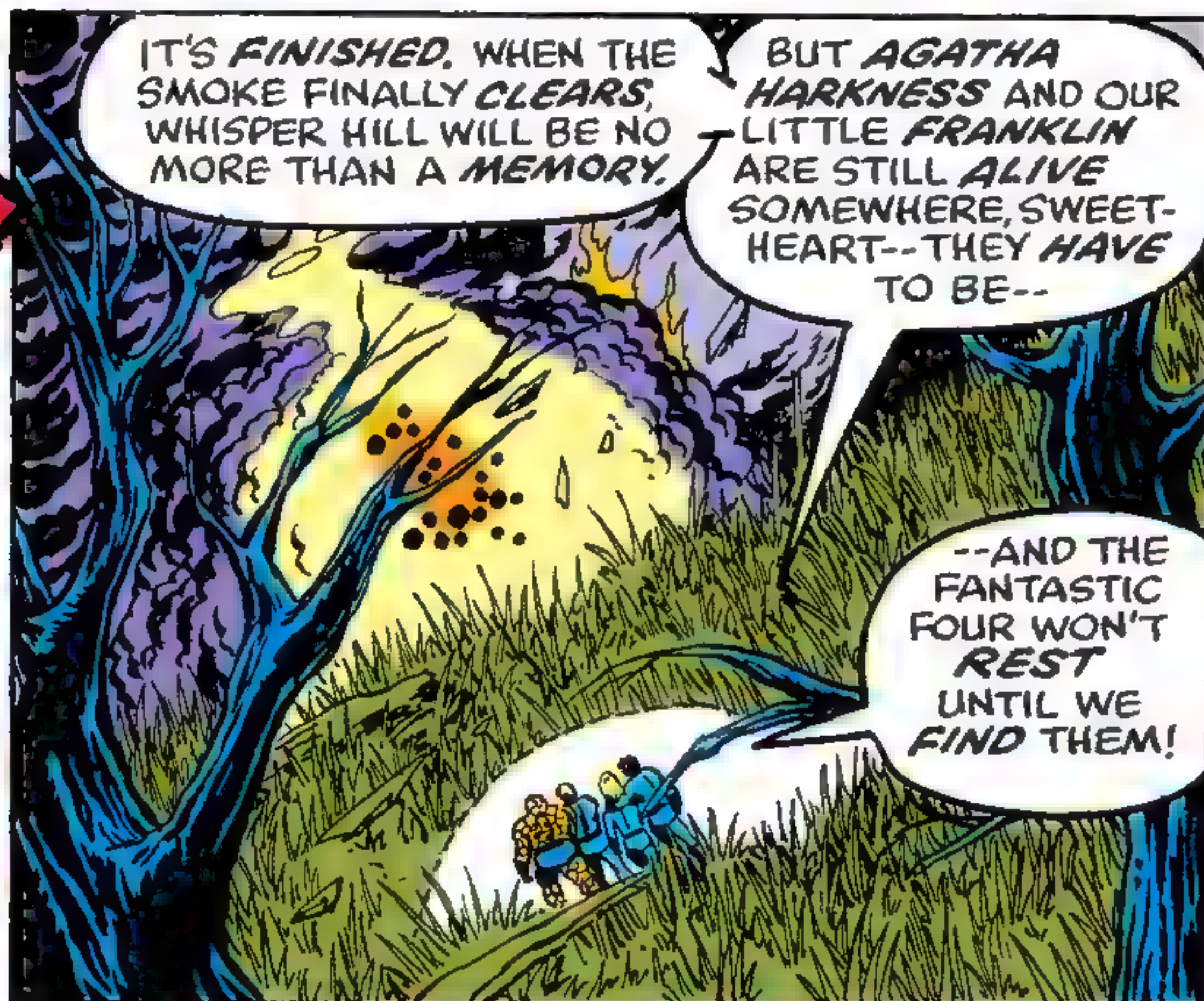


"...I'D SAY IT'S JUST ABOUT
TA GO..."



YOU DID IT, SIS!
WE'RE STILL IN
ONE PIECE!

JUST KEEP YOUR
HEAD DOWN, JOHNNY--
UNTIL THE WRECKAGE
STOPS FALLING!



IT'S FINISHED. WHEN THE
SMOKE FINALLY CLEARS,
WHISPER HILL WILL BE NO
MORE THAN A MEMORY.

BUT AGATHA
HARKNESS AND OUR
LITTLE FRANKLIN
ARE STILL ALIVE
SOMEWHERE, SWEET-
HEART--THEY HAVE
TO BE--

--AND THE
FANTASTIC
FOUR WON'T
REST
UNTIL WE
FIND THEM!

NEXT
ISSUE: **HERE THERE BE WITCHES!**
YOU'LL HATE YOURSELF IF YOU MISS IT!!

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



30¢
©

185
AUG
02462

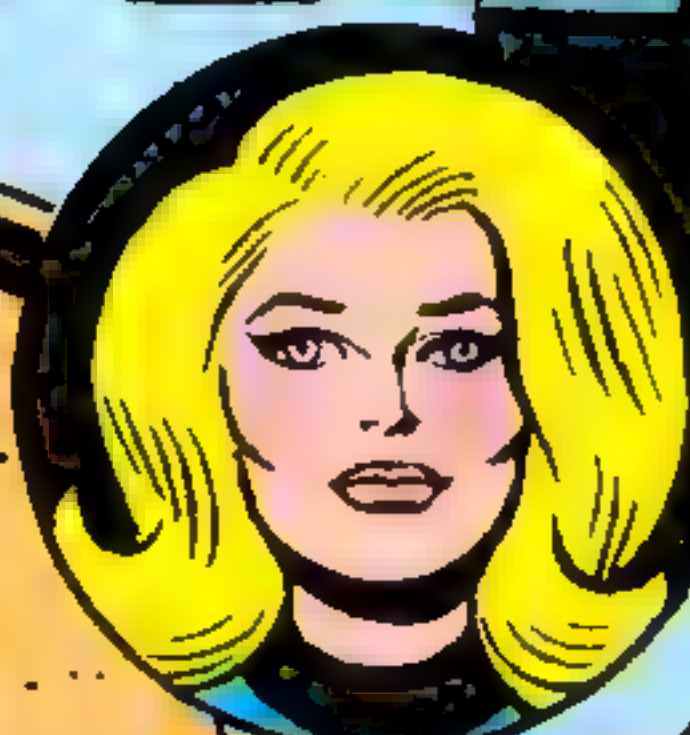
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



TM



TM



AGATHA HARKNESS
HAS **TAKEN**
LITTLE FRANKLIN!

AND WE'LL
HAVE TO DEFEAT
AN ARMY OF
GARGOYLES
TO GET HIM
BACK!!

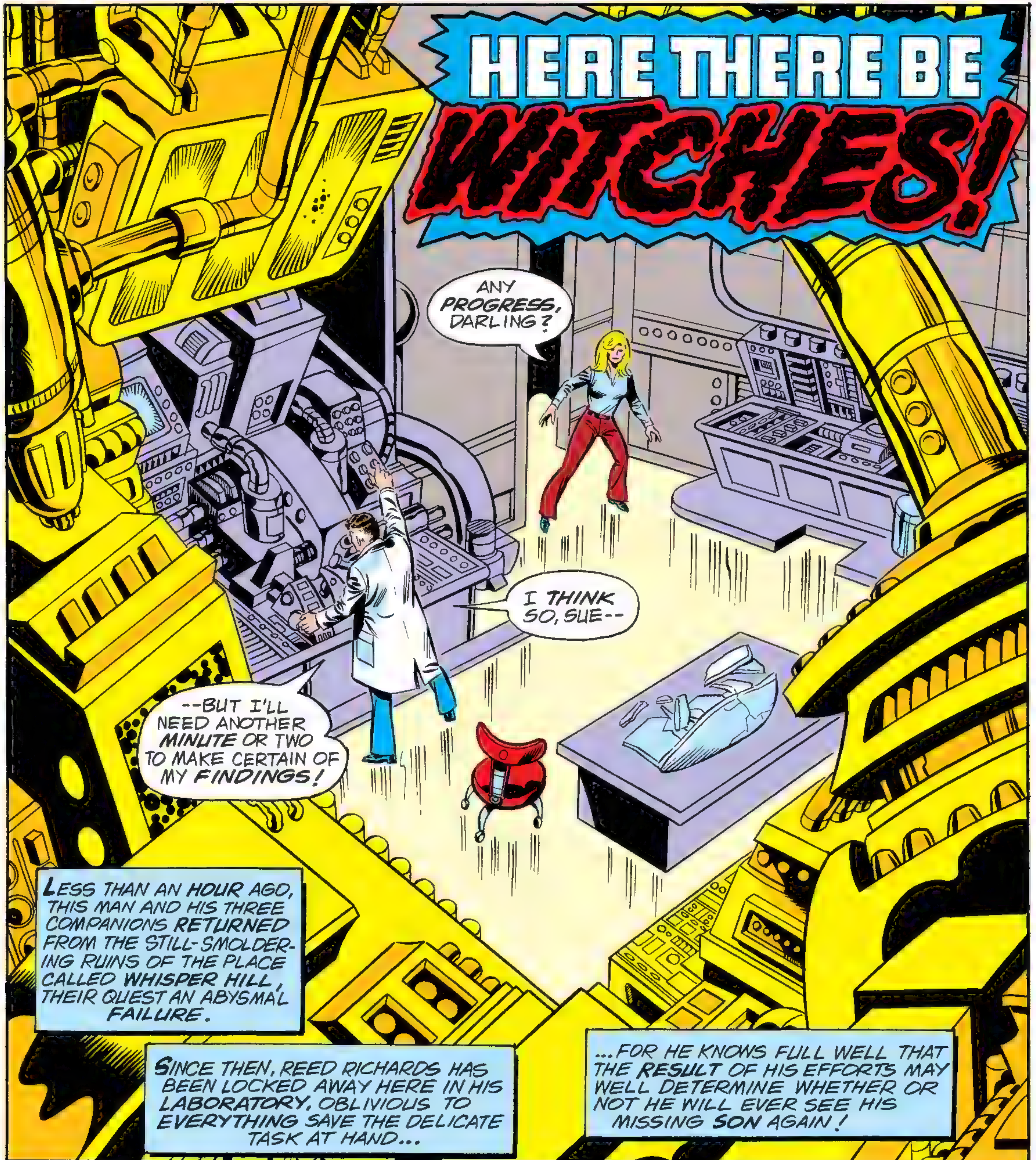
HERE
THERE BE
WITCHES!

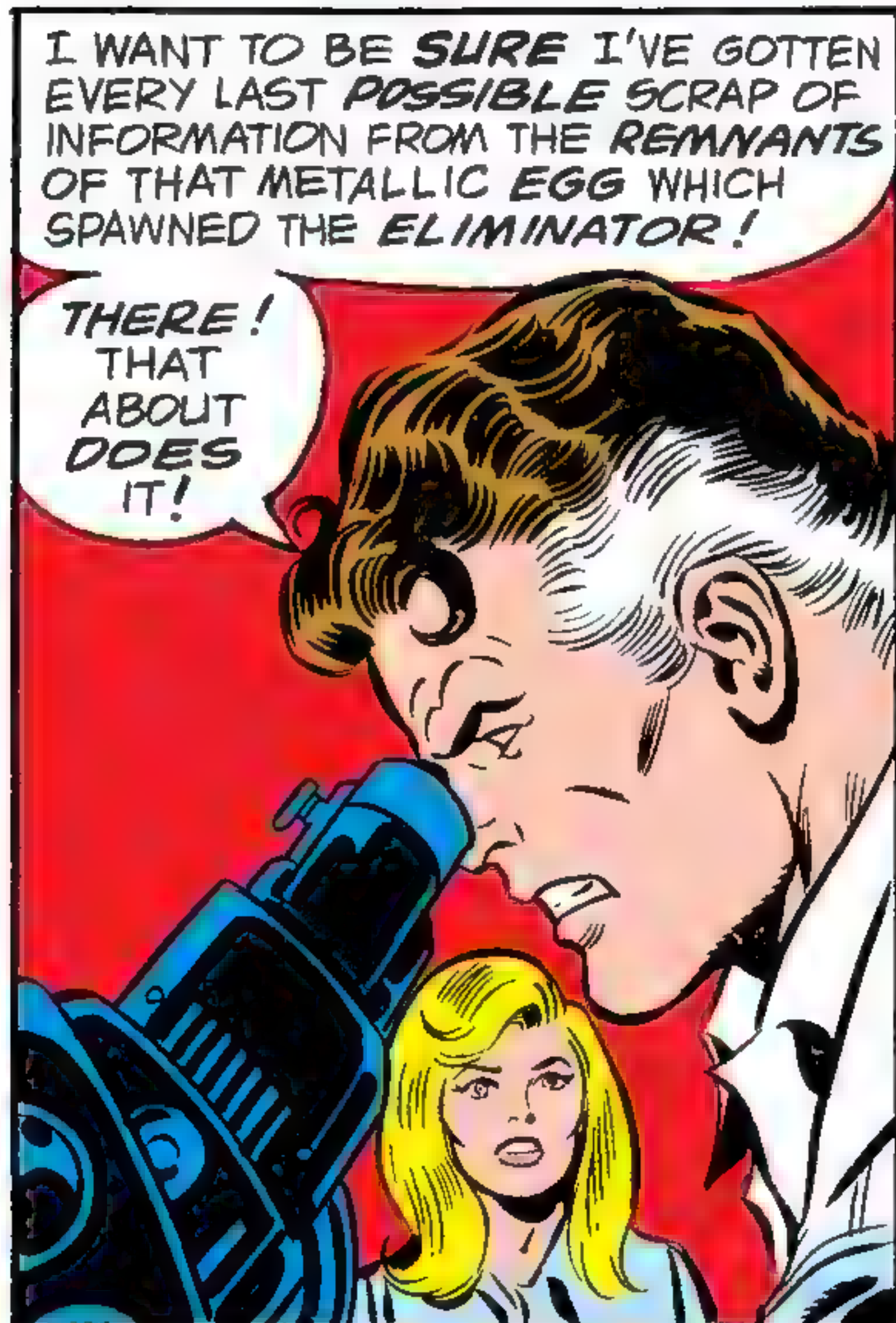
A brilliant scientist—his best friend—the woman he loves—and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human!

MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR—and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

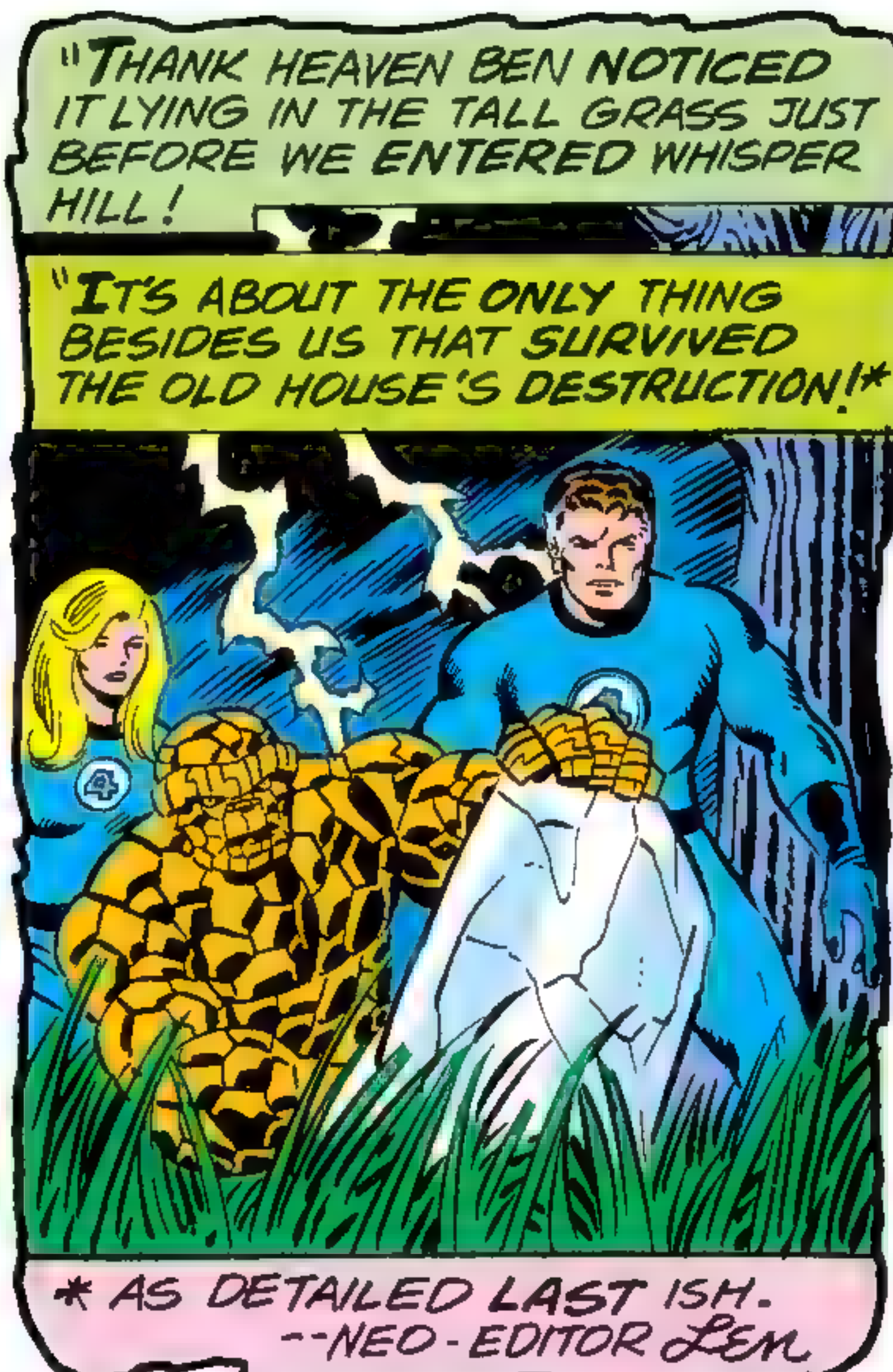
LEN WEIN: *WRITER* / GEORGE PÉREZ & JOE SINNOTT: *ILLUSTRATORS* / GLYNIS WEIN: *COLORIST*
Editor GASPAR: *LETTERER*





I WANT TO BE **SURE** I'VE GOTTEN EVERY LAST **POSSIBLE** SCRAP OF INFORMATION FROM THE **REMNANTS** OF THAT METALLIC EGG WHICH SPAWNED THE **ELIMINATOR**!

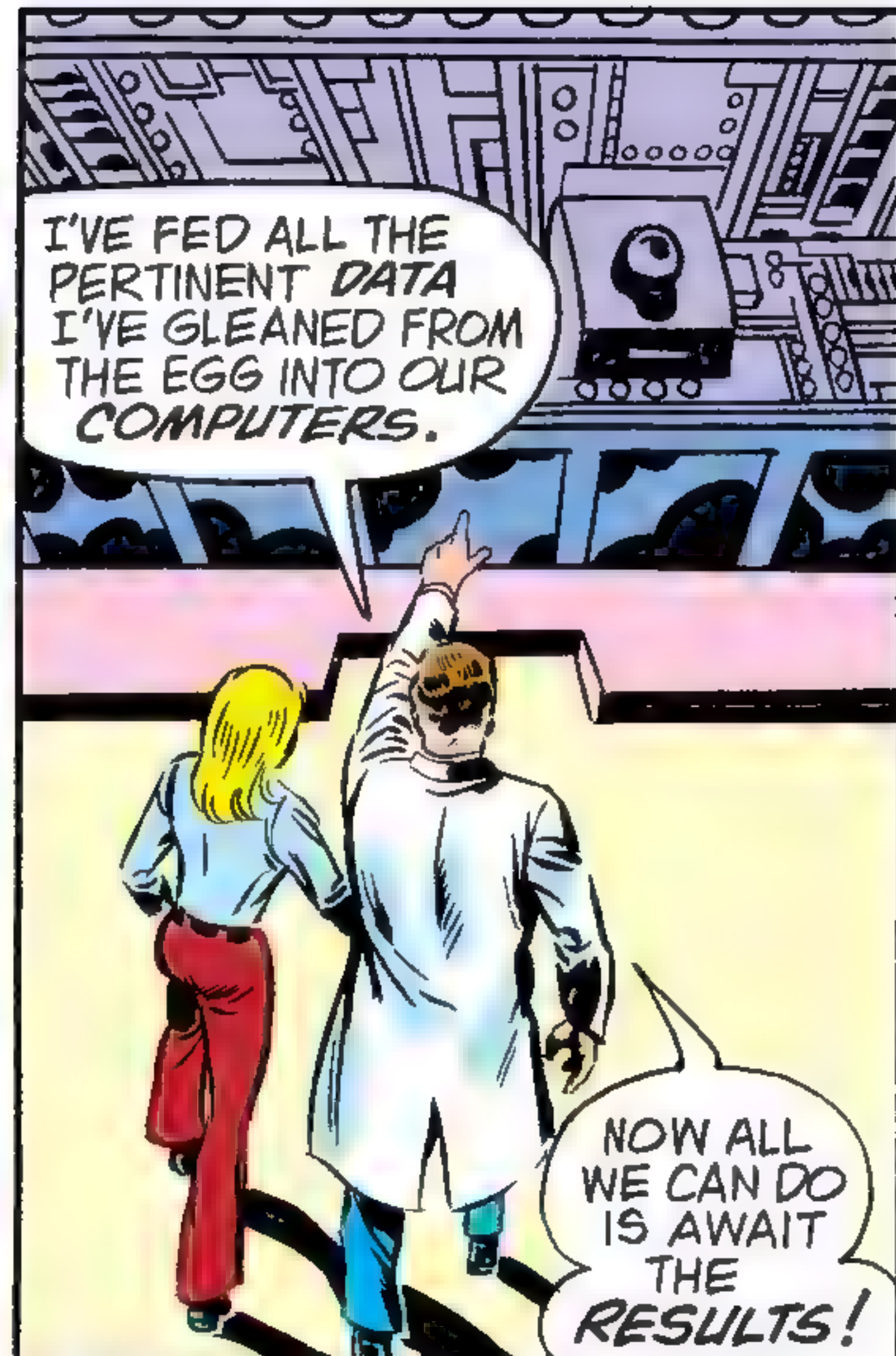
THERE!
THAT
ABOUT
DOES
IT!



"THANK HEAVEN BEN NOTICED IT LYING IN THE TALL GRASS JUST BEFORE WE ENTERED WHISPER HILL!"

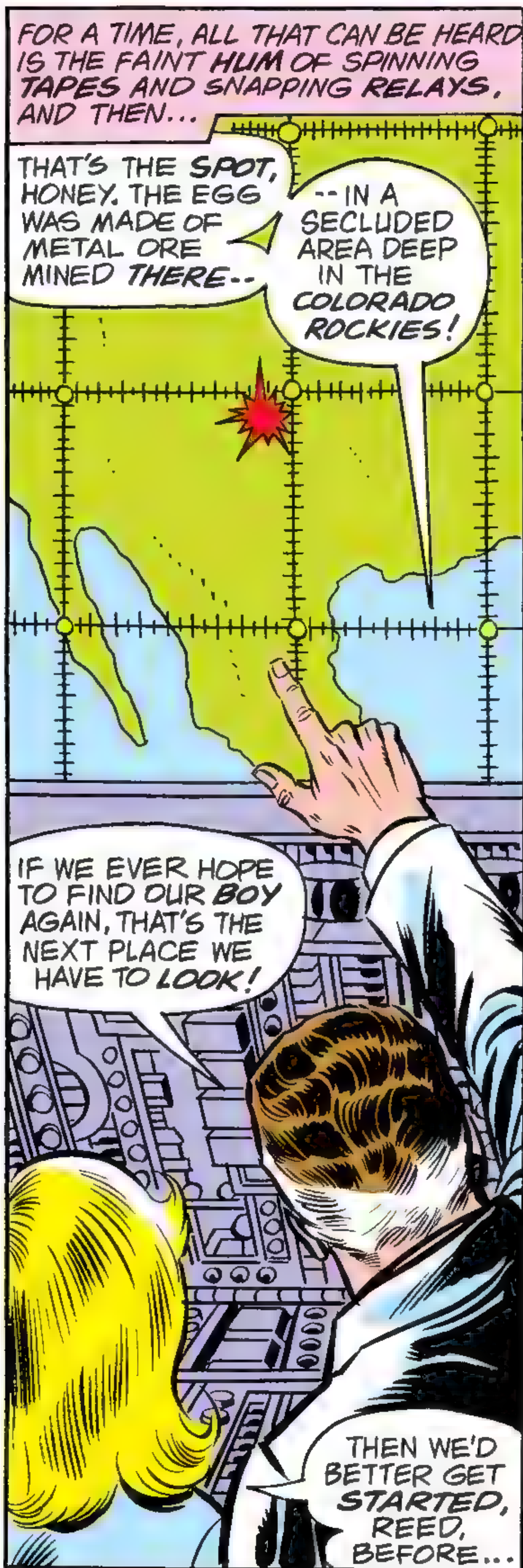
"IT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING BESIDES US THAT SURVIVED THE OLD HOUSE'S DESTRUCTION!*"

* AS DETAILED LAST ISM.
--NEO-EDITOR LEM



I'VE FED ALL THE PERTINENT DATA I'VE GLEANED FROM THE EGG INTO OUR COMPUTERS.

NOW ALL WE CAN DO IS AWAIT THE RESULTS!



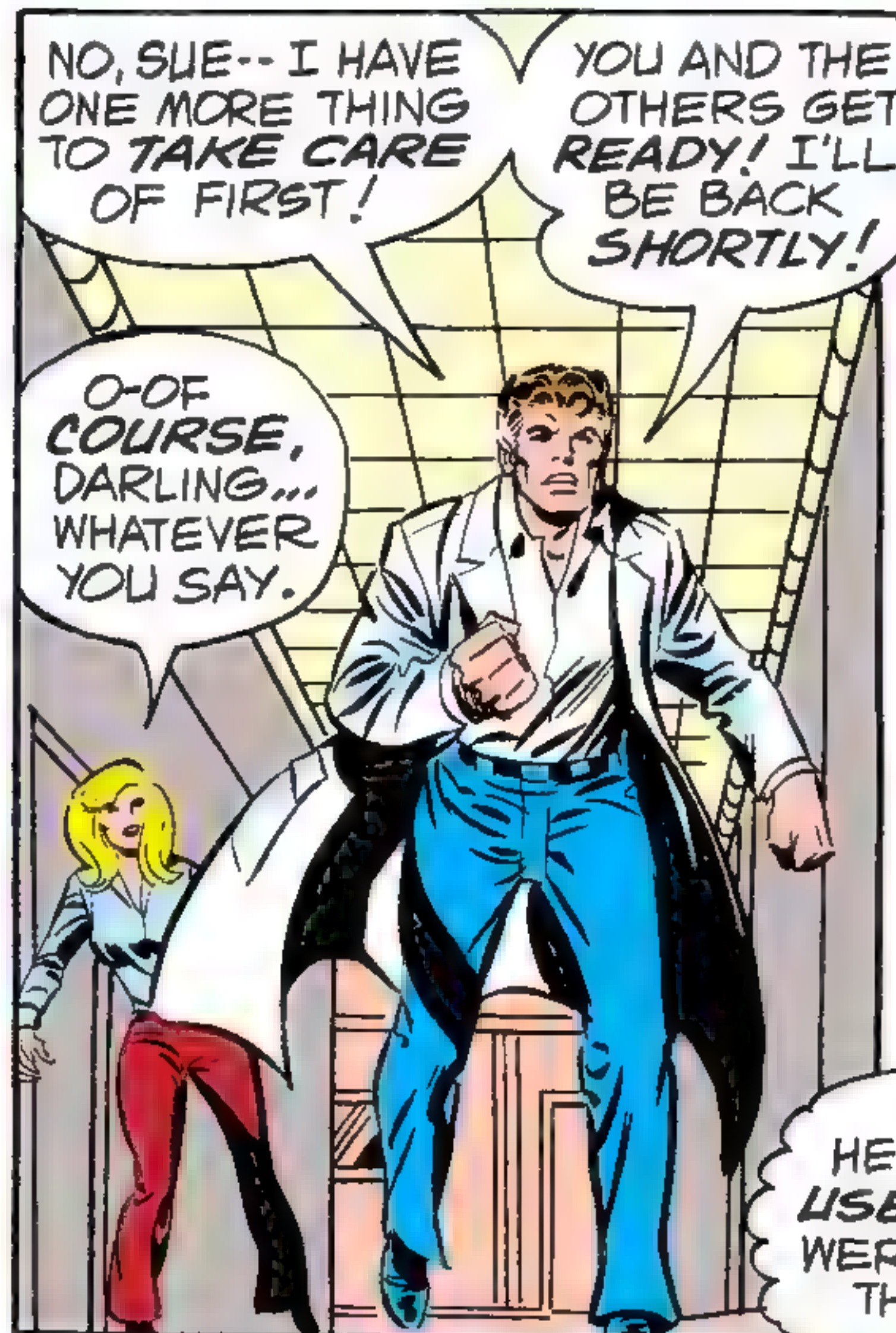
FOR A TIME, ALL THAT CAN BE HEARD IS THE FAINT HUM OF SPINNING TAPES AND SNAPPING RELAYS, AND THEN...

THAT'S THE SPOT, HONEY. THE EGG WAS MADE OF METAL ORE MINED THERE--

--IN A SECLUDED AREA DEEP IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES!

IF WE EVER HOPE TO FIND OUR BOY AGAIN, THAT'S THE NEXT PLACE WE HAVE TO LOOK!

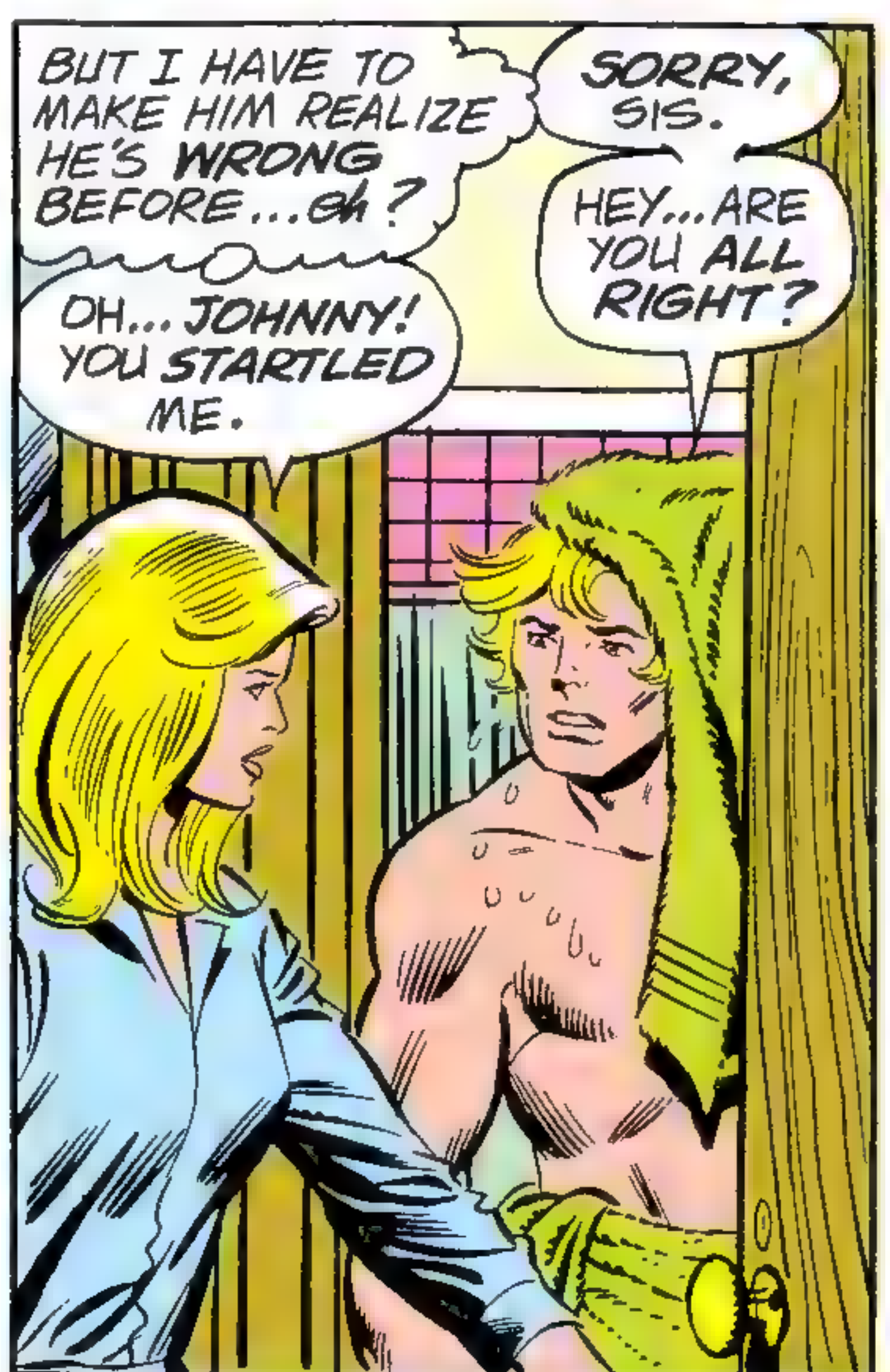
THEN WE'D BETTER GET STARTED, REED, BEFORE...



NO, SUE-- I HAVE ONE MORE THING TO TAKE CARE OF FIRST!

O-OF COURSE, DARLING... WHATEVER YOU SAY.

YOU AND THE OTHERS GET READY! I'LL BE BACK SHORTLY!



BUT I HAVE TO MAKE HIM REALIZE HE'S WRONG BEFORE...ah?

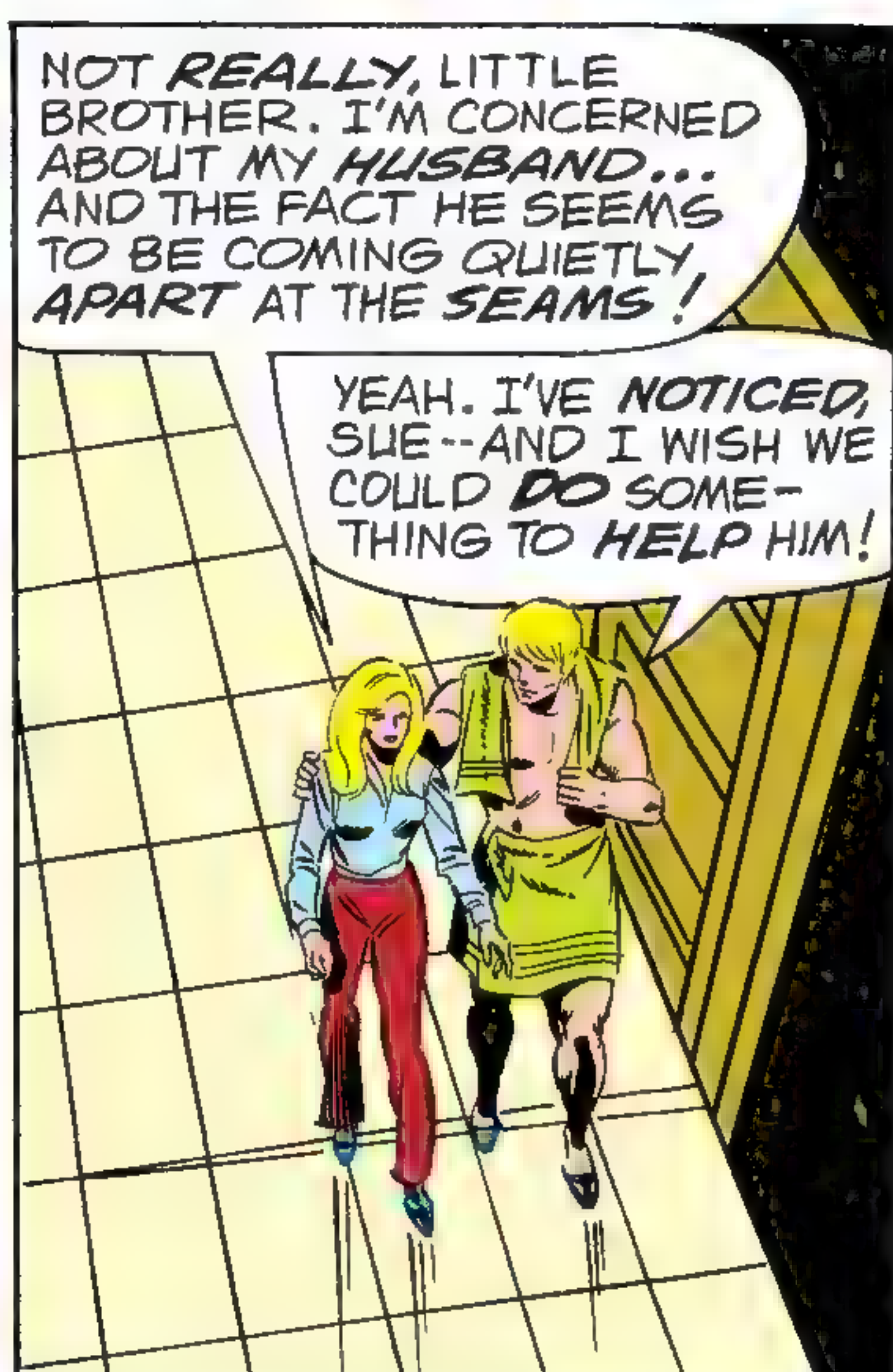
OH... JOHNNY! YOU STARTLED ME.

SORRY, SIS.
HEY...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



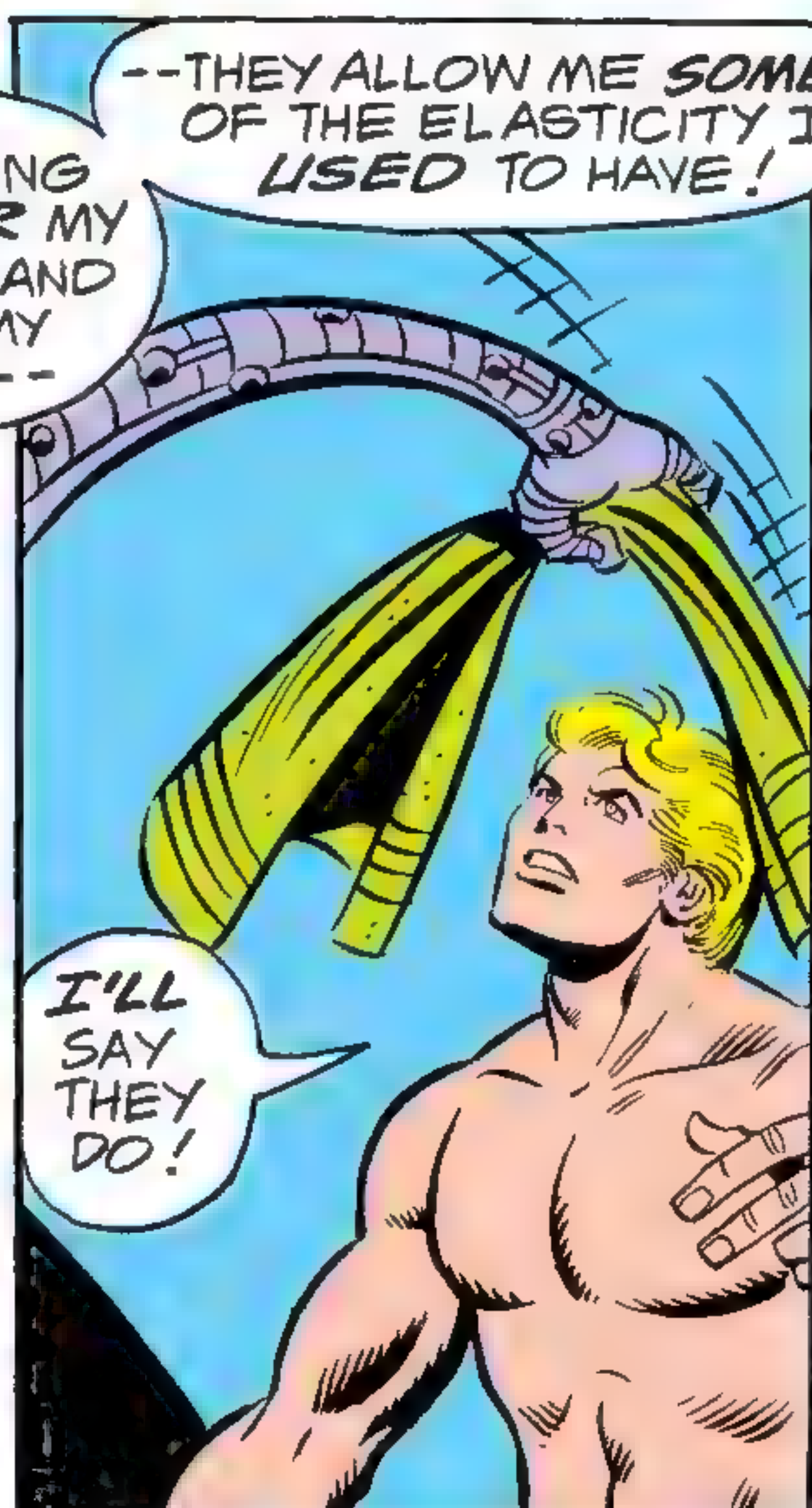
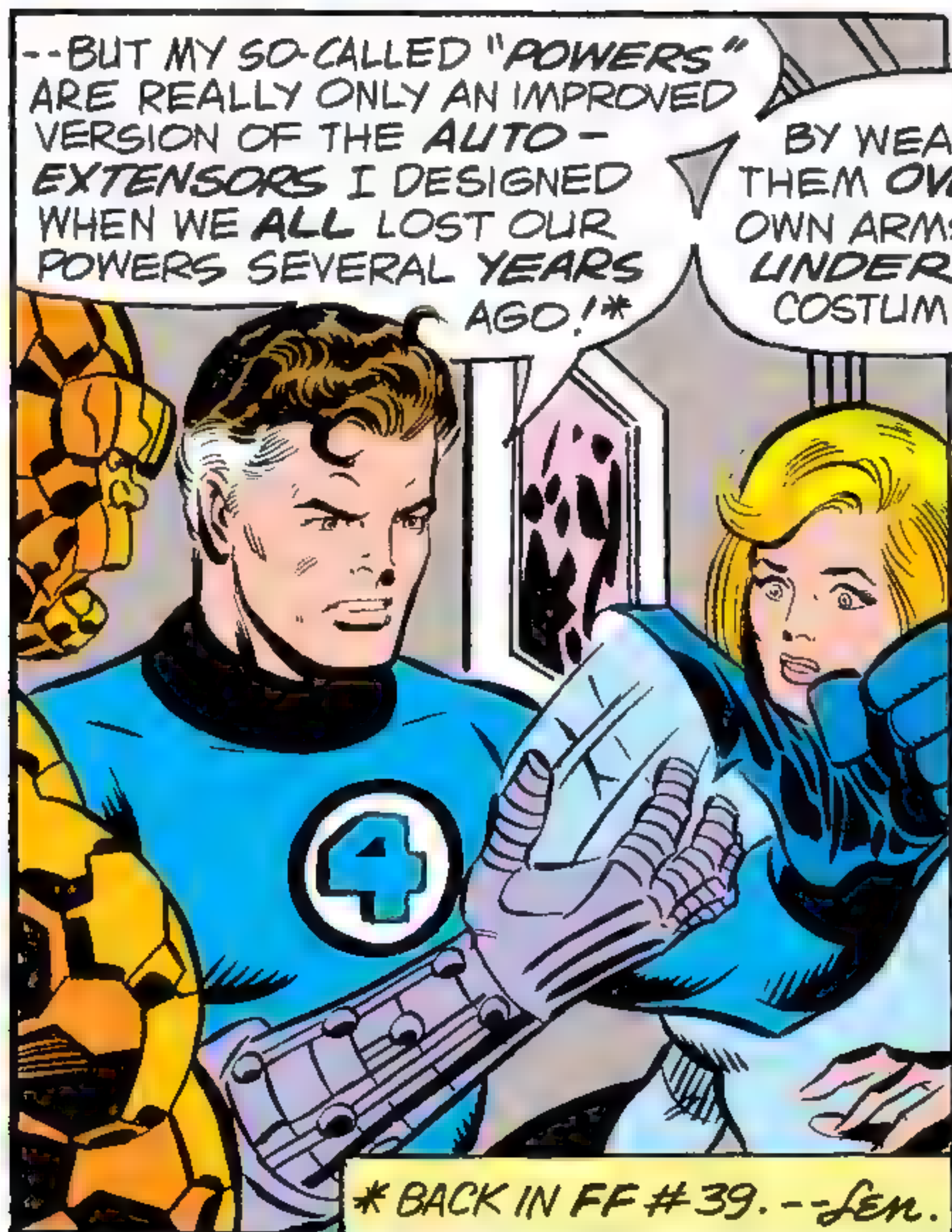
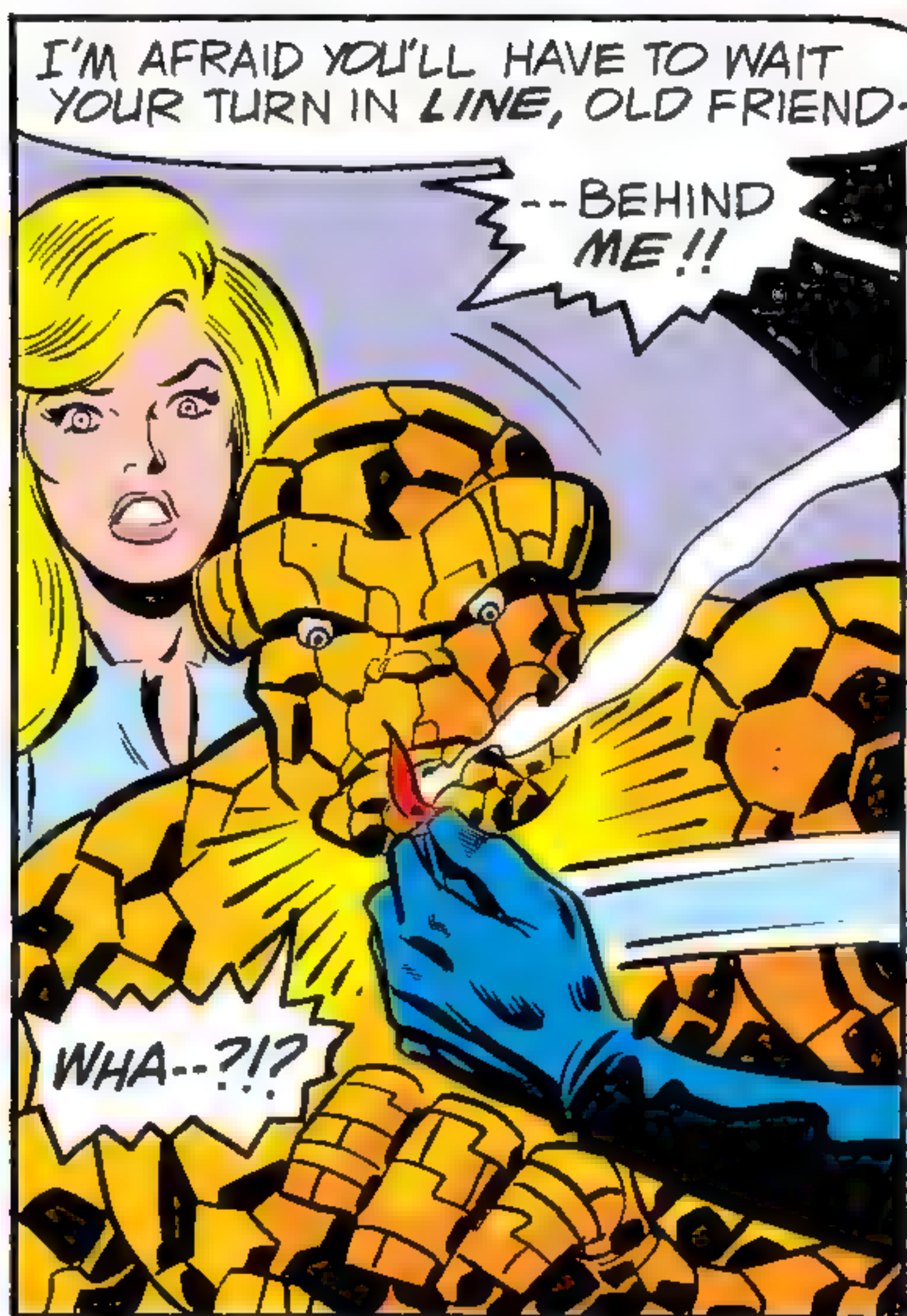
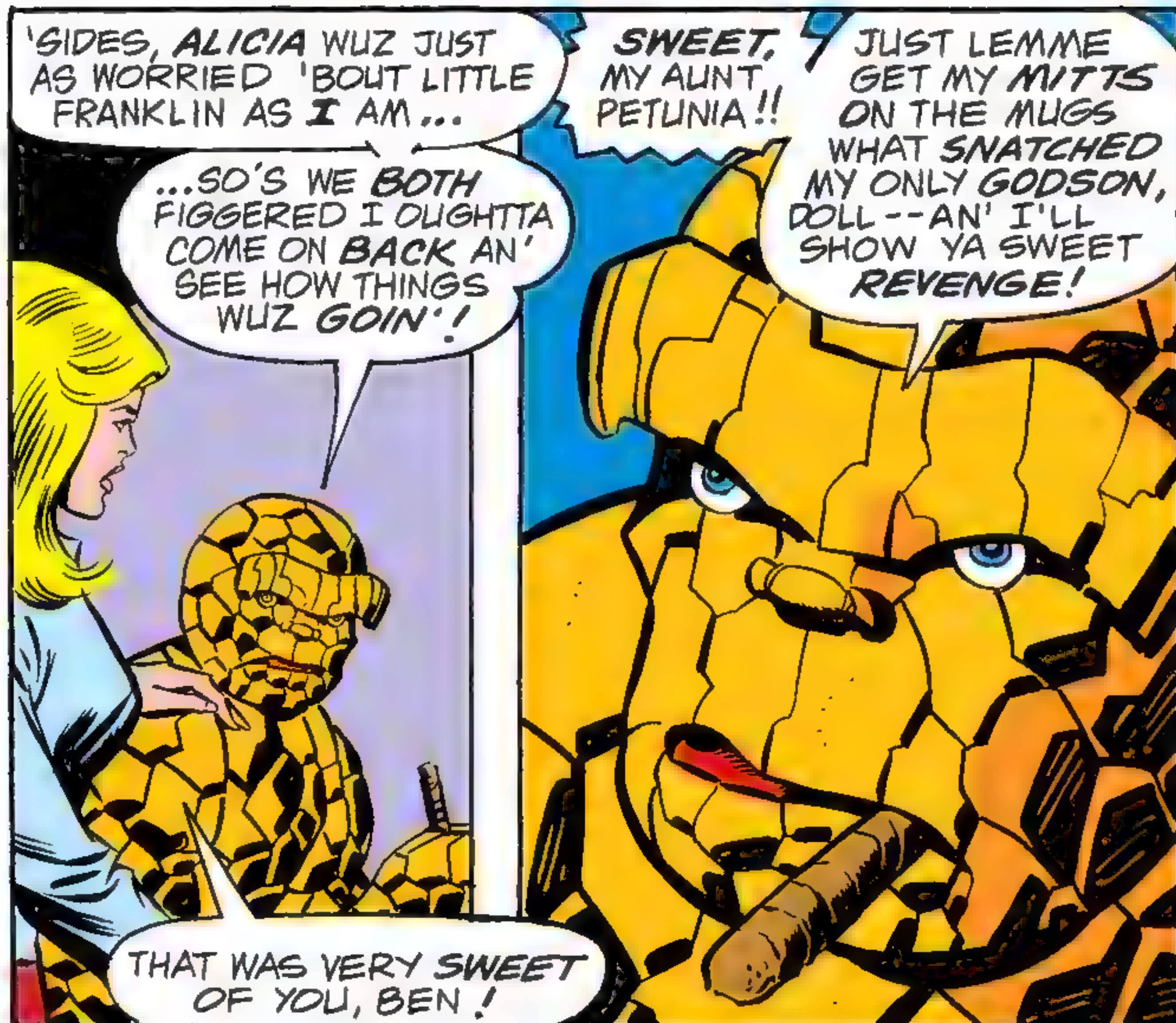
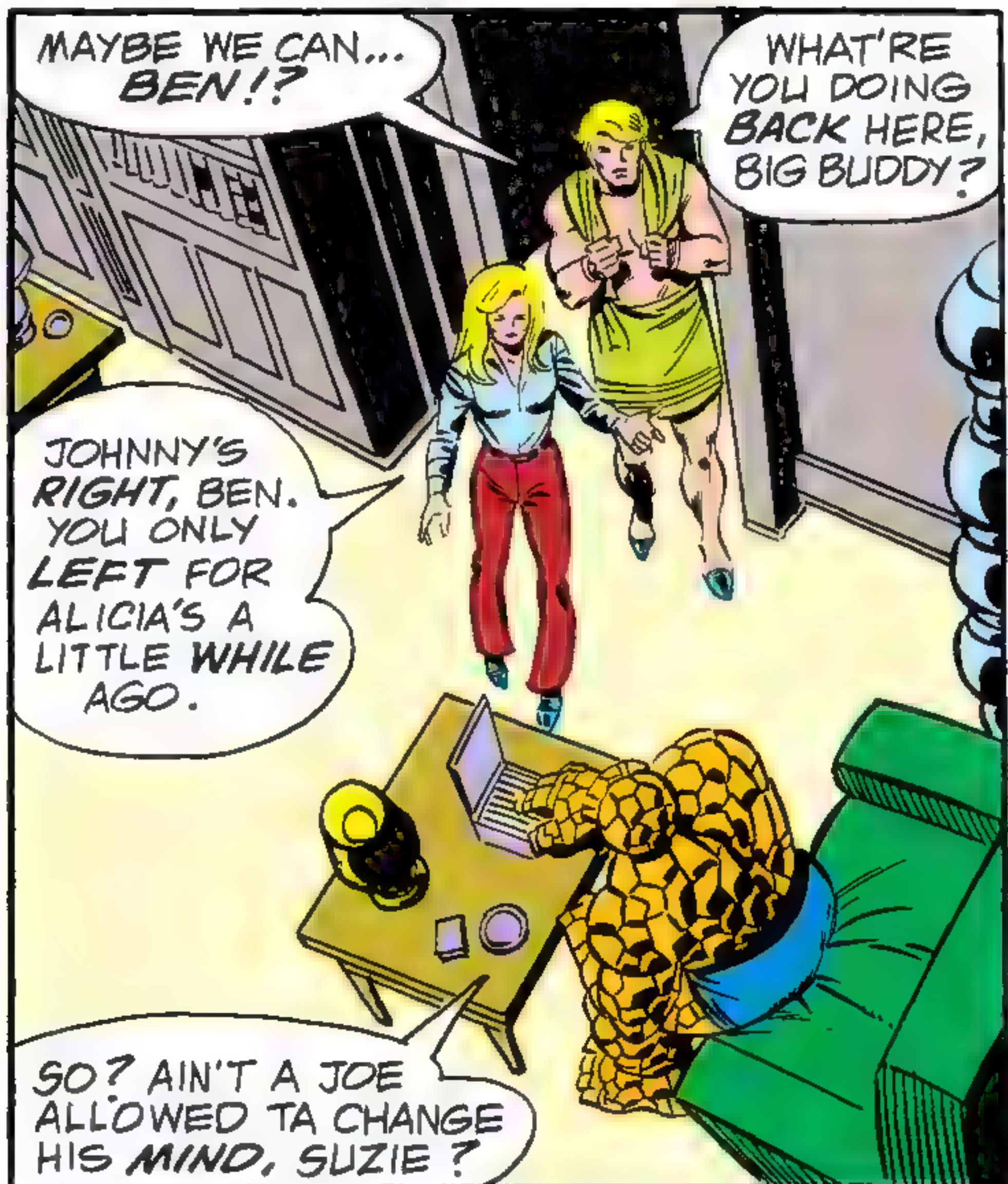
POOR REED. HE JUST HASN'T BEEN HIMSELF SINCE HE LOST HIS STRETCHING POWERS.

HE FEELS UTTERLY USELESS... AS IF HE WERE A BURDEN TO THE REST OF US!



NOT REALLY, LITTLE BROTHER. I'M CONCERNED ABOUT MY HUSBAND... AND THE FACT HE SEEMS TO BE COMING QUIETLY APART AT THE SEAMS!

YEAH. I'VE NOTICED, SUE--AND I WISH WE COULD DO SOMETHING TO HELP HIM!

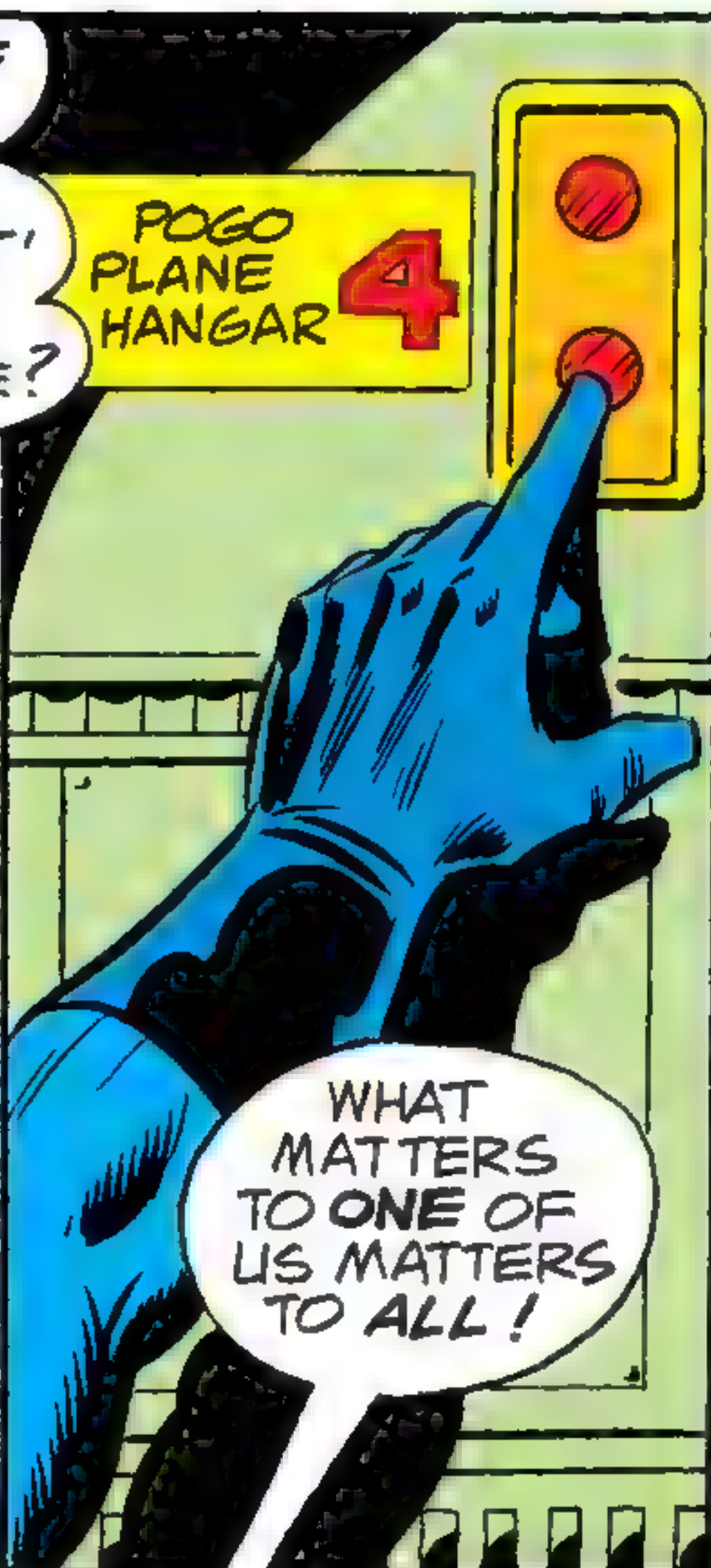




JOHNNY... SUE... I WANT YOU TO KNOW I APPRECIATE YOUR PUTTING ON THOSE MATCHING UNIFORMS!

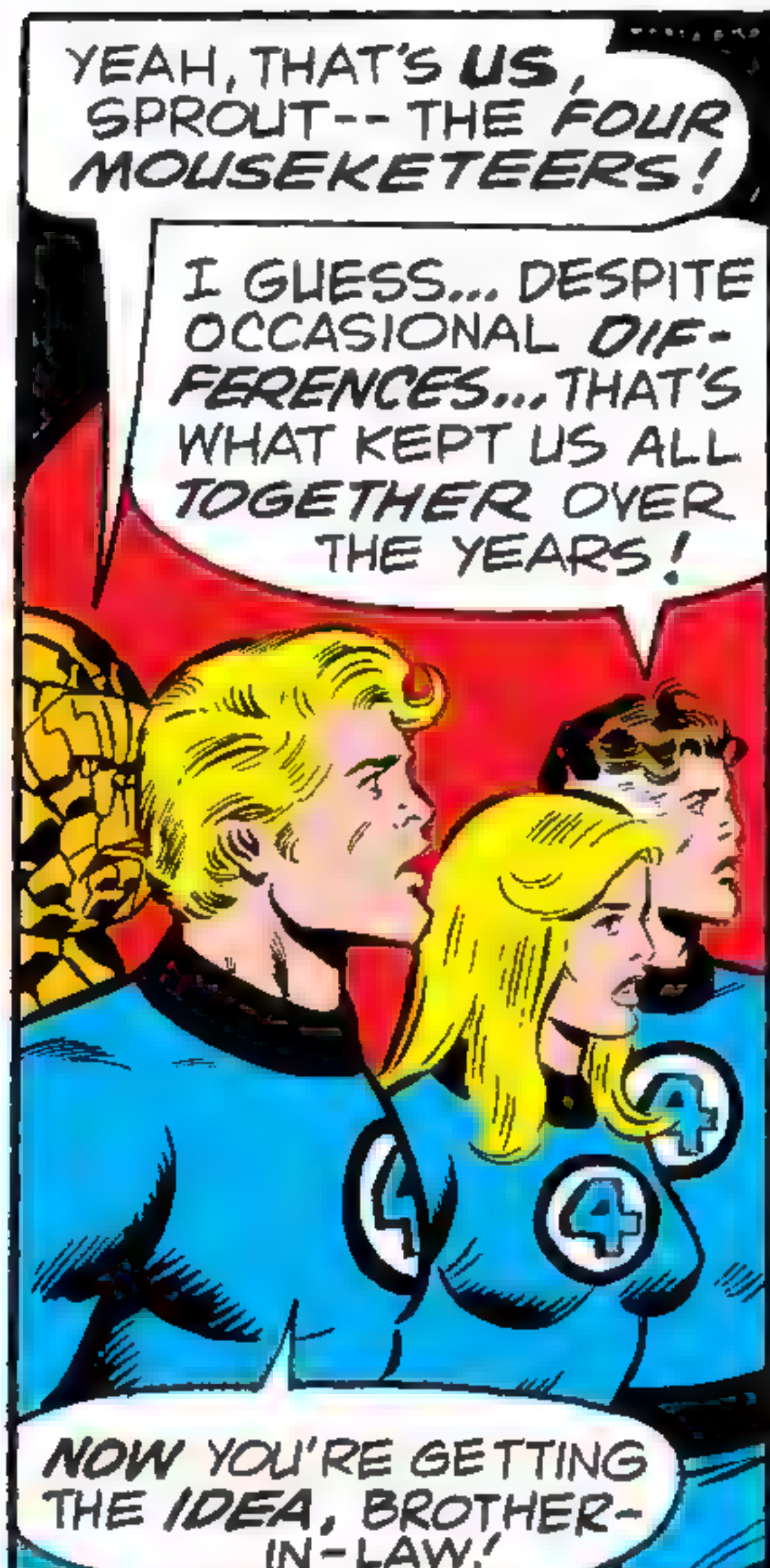
WHY *SHOULDN'T* THEY, PAL?

AFTER ALL, WE'RE A TEAM, AREN'T WE?



POGO PLANE HANGAR 4

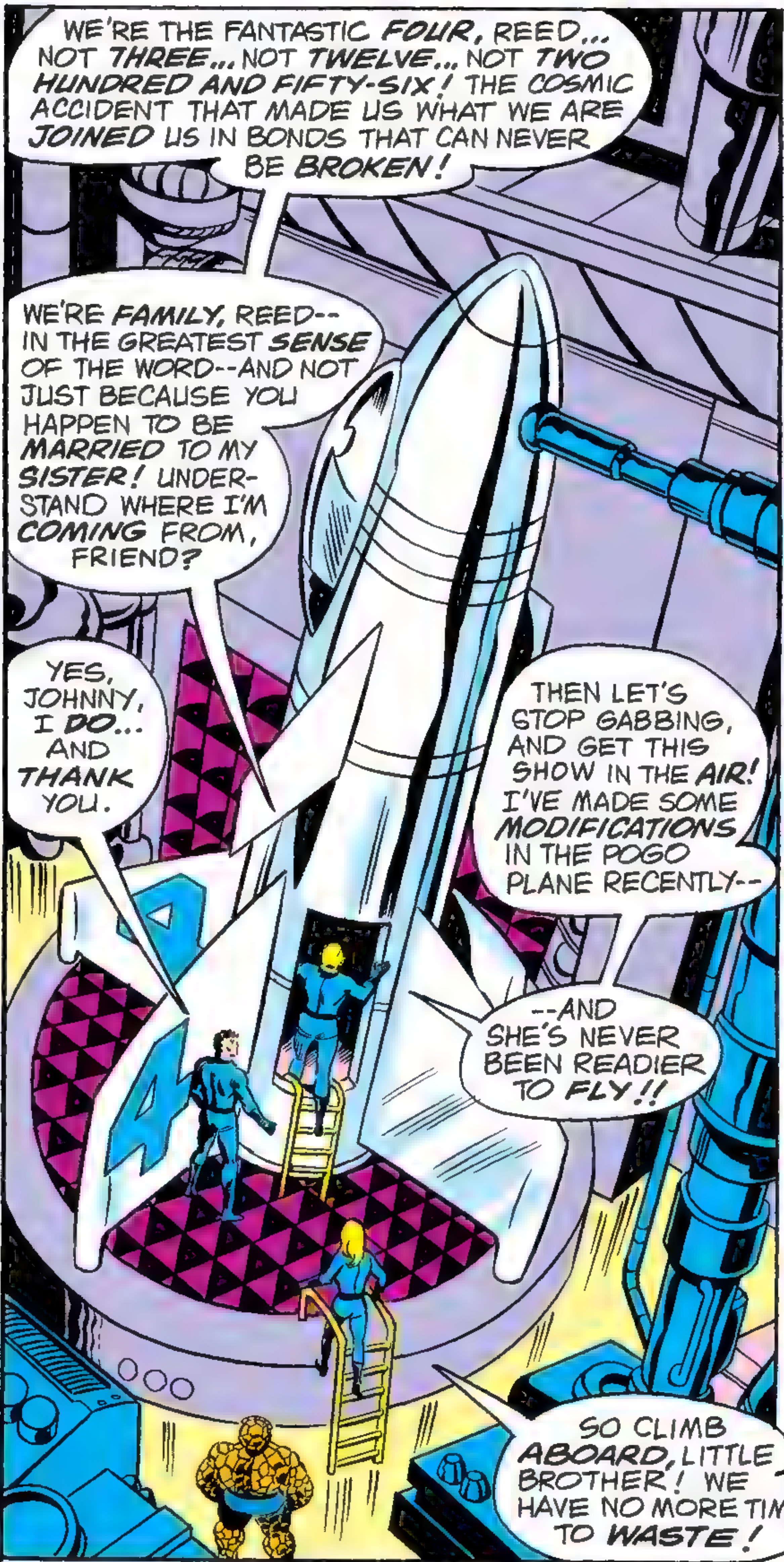
WHAT MATTERS TO ONE OF US MATTERS TO ALL!



YEAH, THAT'S US, SPROUT-- THE *FOUR* MOUSEKETEERS!

I GUESS... DESPITE OCCASIONAL *DIF-FERENCES*... THAT'S WHAT KEPT US ALL TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS!

NOW YOU'RE GETTING THE *IDEA*, BROTHER-IN-LAW!



WE'RE THE FANTASTIC *FOUR*, REED... NOT *THREE*... NOT *TWELVE*... NOT *TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX*! THE COSMIC ACCIDENT THAT MADE US WHAT WE ARE JOINED US IN BONDS THAT CAN NEVER BE BROKEN!

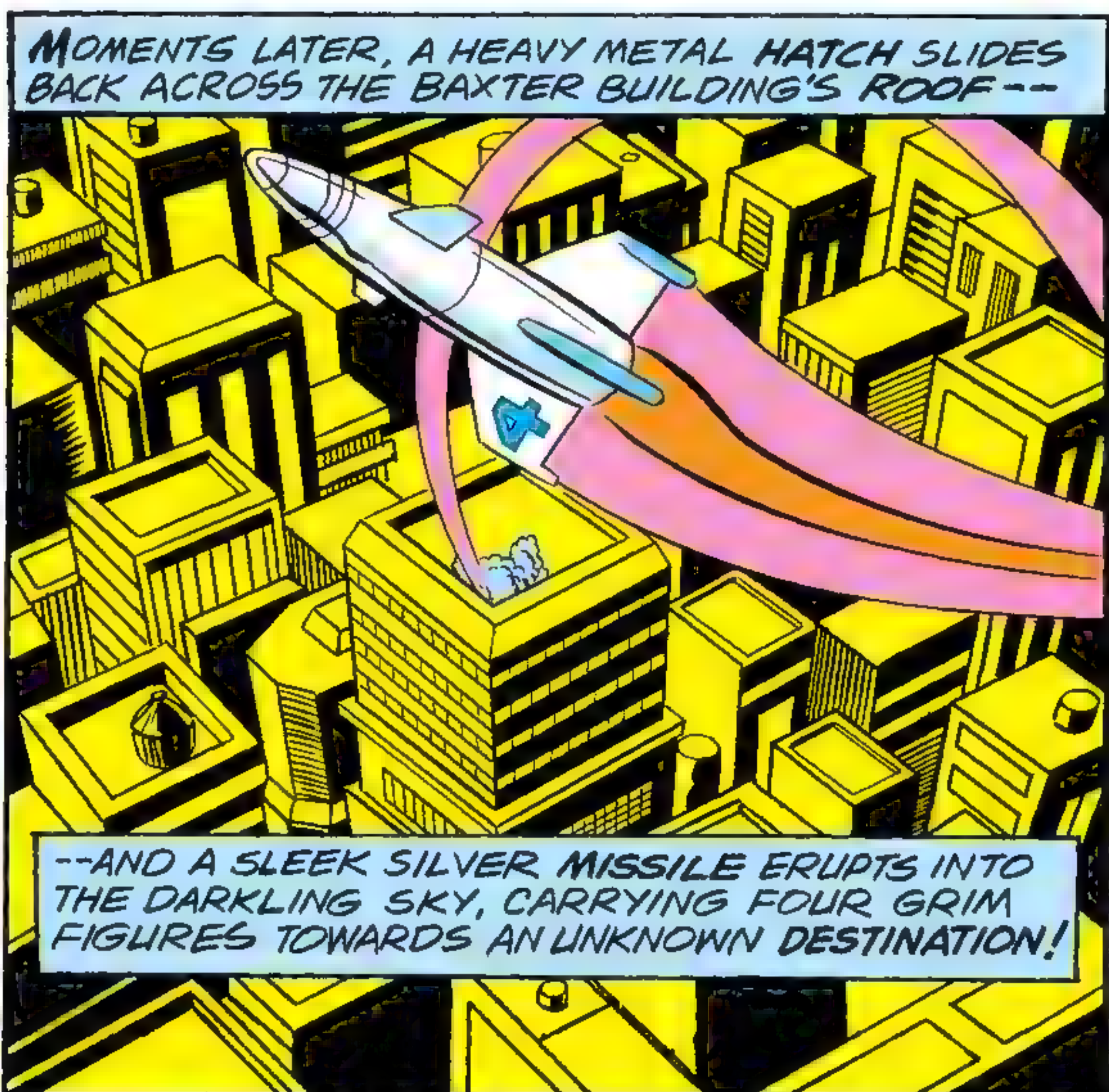
WE'RE *FAMILY*, REED-- IN THE GREATEST *SENSE* OF THE WORD--AND NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU HAPPEN TO BE MARRIED TO MY *SISTER*! UNDERSTAND WHERE I'M *COMING* FROM, FRIEND?

YES, JOHNNY, I *DO*... AND *THANK* YOU.

THEN LET'S STOP GABBING, AND GET THIS SHOW IN THE AIR! I'VE MADE SOME *MODIFICATIONS* IN THE POGO PLANE RECENTLY--

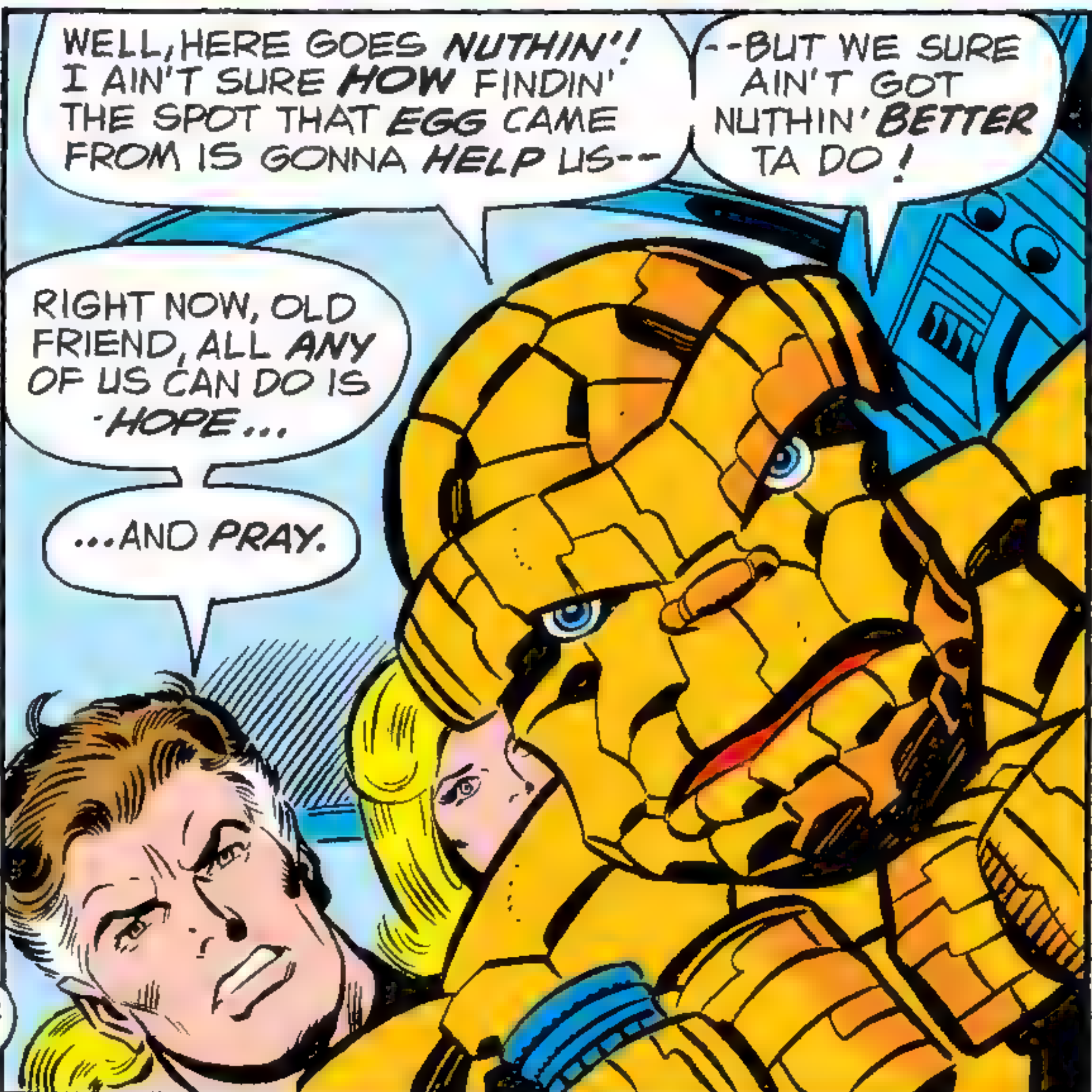
--AND SHE'S NEVER BEEN READIER TO *FLY*!!

SO CLIMB ABOARD, LITTLE BROTHER! WE HAVE NO MORE TIME TO *WASTE*!



MOMENTS LATER, A HEAVY METAL HATCH SLIDES BACK ACROSS THE BAXTER BUILDING'S ROOF--

--AND A SLEEK SILVER MISSILE ERUPTS INTO THE DARKLING SKY, CARRYING FOUR GRIM FIGURES TOWARDS AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION!



WELL, HERE GOES *NUTHIN'*! I AIN'T SURE *HOW* FINDIN' THE SPOT THAT *EGG* CAME FROM IS GONNA *HELP* US--

--BUT WE SURE AIN'T GOT NUTHIN' *BETTER* TA DO!

RIGHT NOW, OLD FRIEND, ALL *ANY* OF US CAN DO IS *HOPE*...

...AND *PRAY*.

BUT EVEN AS THE POGO PLANE VANISHES INTO THE DISTANCE, A CRUMPLED PIECE OF PAPER DRIFTS LAZILY TOWARDS THE BAXTER BUILDING, AGAINST THE STIFFLY-BLOWING BREEZE--

--A PIECE OF PAPER COLORED A DISTRESSINGLY FAMILIAR SHADE OF GREEN!

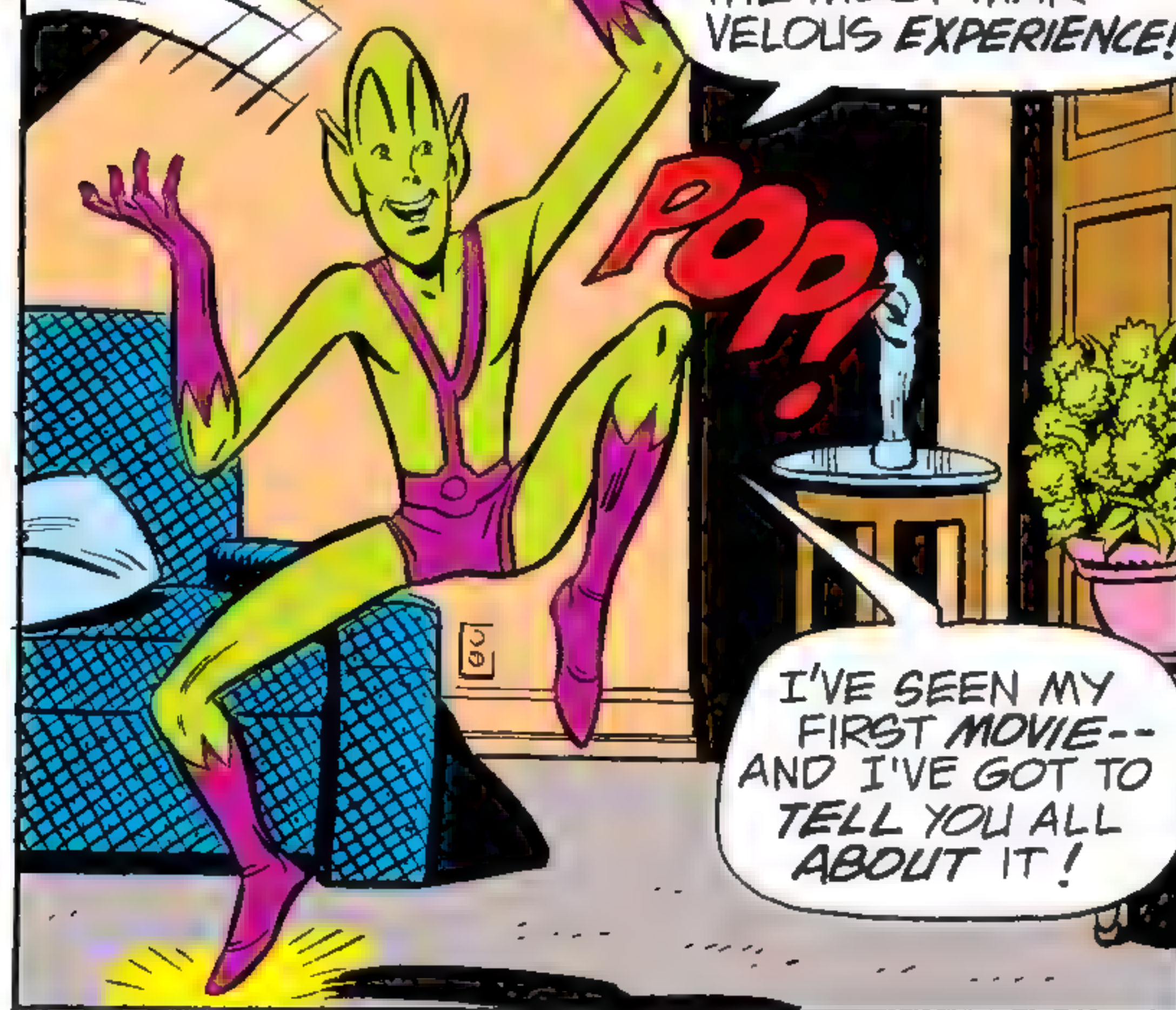


GENTLY, IT SETTLES IN THRU AN OPEN WINDOW--WITHOUT SETTING OFF A SINGLE ONE OF REED RICHARDS' SENSITIVE INTRUDER ALARMS!



NOT FOR YOU--KNOW-WHO!

HEY, EVERYONE, THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN IS BACK-- AND I'VE JUST HAD THE MOST MARVELOUS EXPERIENCE!

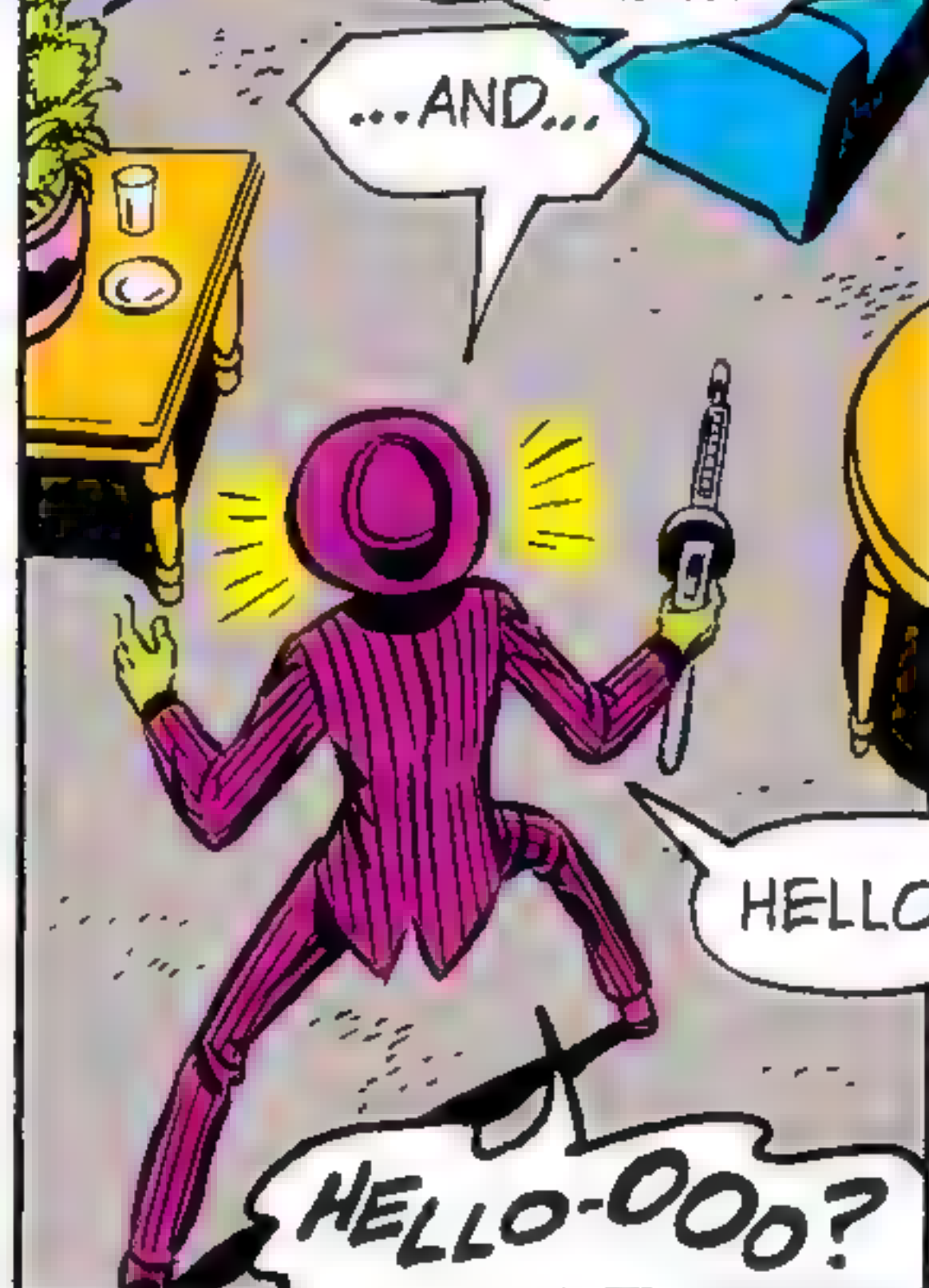


IT WAS A REVIVAL OF SOMETHING CALLED "THE ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE"--



--AND IT FEATURED THE MOST CHARMING HUMANS I'VE YET SEEN ON THIS WORLD!

...AND THEY WERE ALL BUSY KILLING ONE ANOTHER OVER CONTROL OF SOME MYTHICAL KINGDOM CALLED CHICAGO AND...



...AND...

HEY--IS ANY-BODY HERE??



HMMMM-- IT APPEARS I'M ALONE. SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO UNTIL MY FRIENDS RETURN FROM...



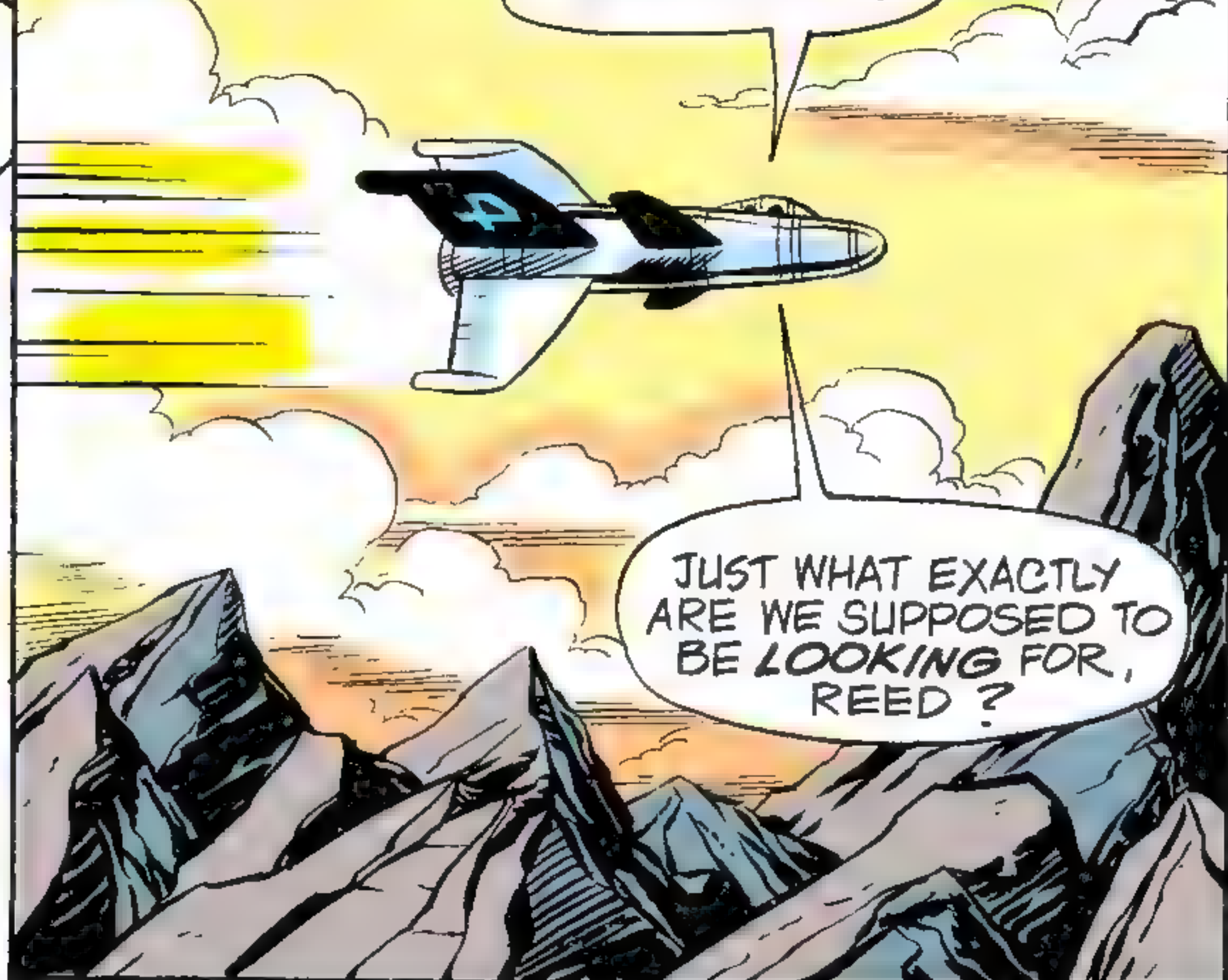
AFTER ALL, THERE IS STILL SO VERY MUCH I HAVE TO LEARN ABOUT MY ADOPTED WORLD!

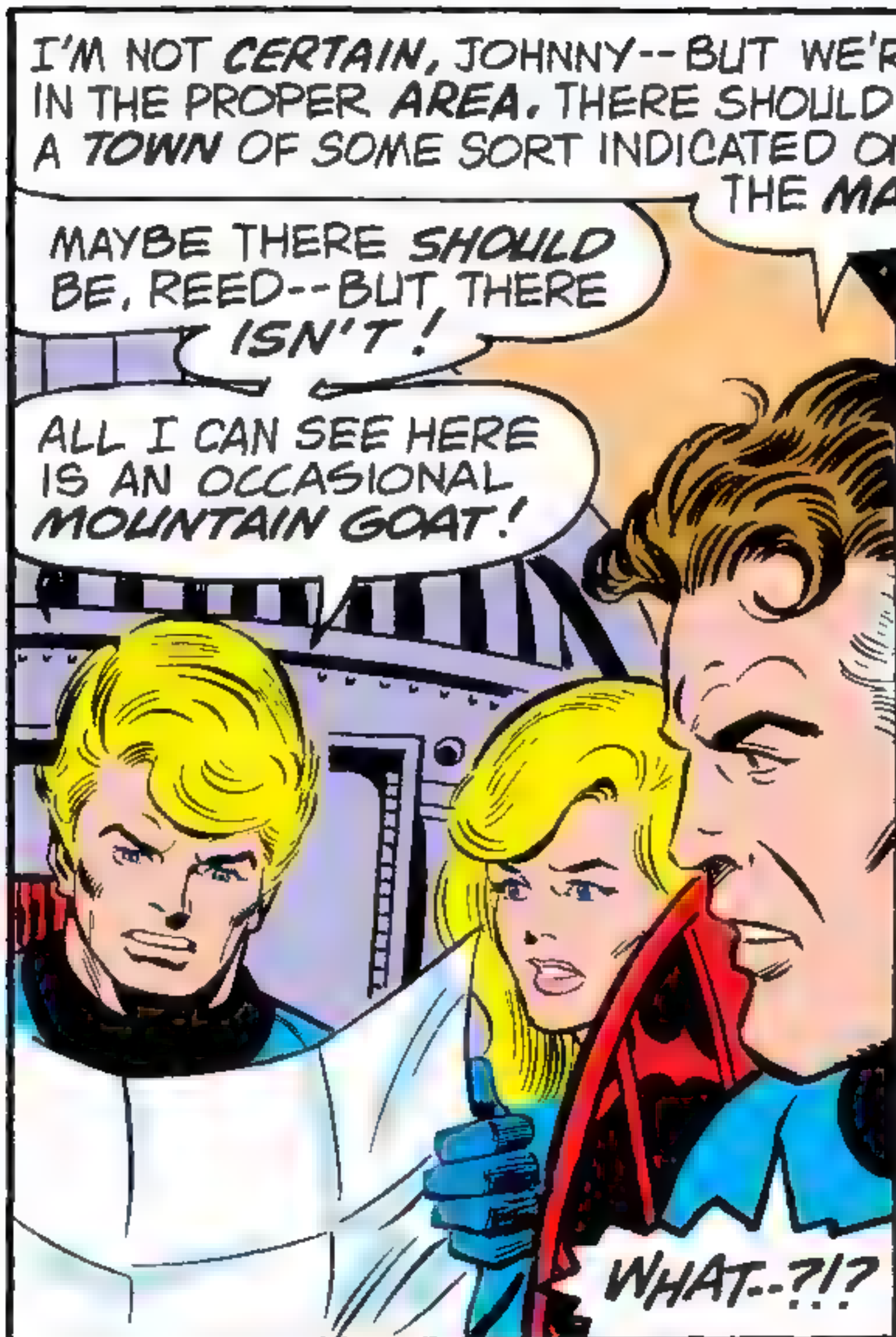
AND PERHAPS THIS TIME I'LL FINALLY FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE IS STARKY AND WHICH ONE IS HUTCH!



SOME TIME LATER, SEVERAL THOUSAND MILES AWAY...

AIN'T EXACTLY THE BEST SPOT INNA WORLD FER A BOWLIN' ALLEY, IS IT?



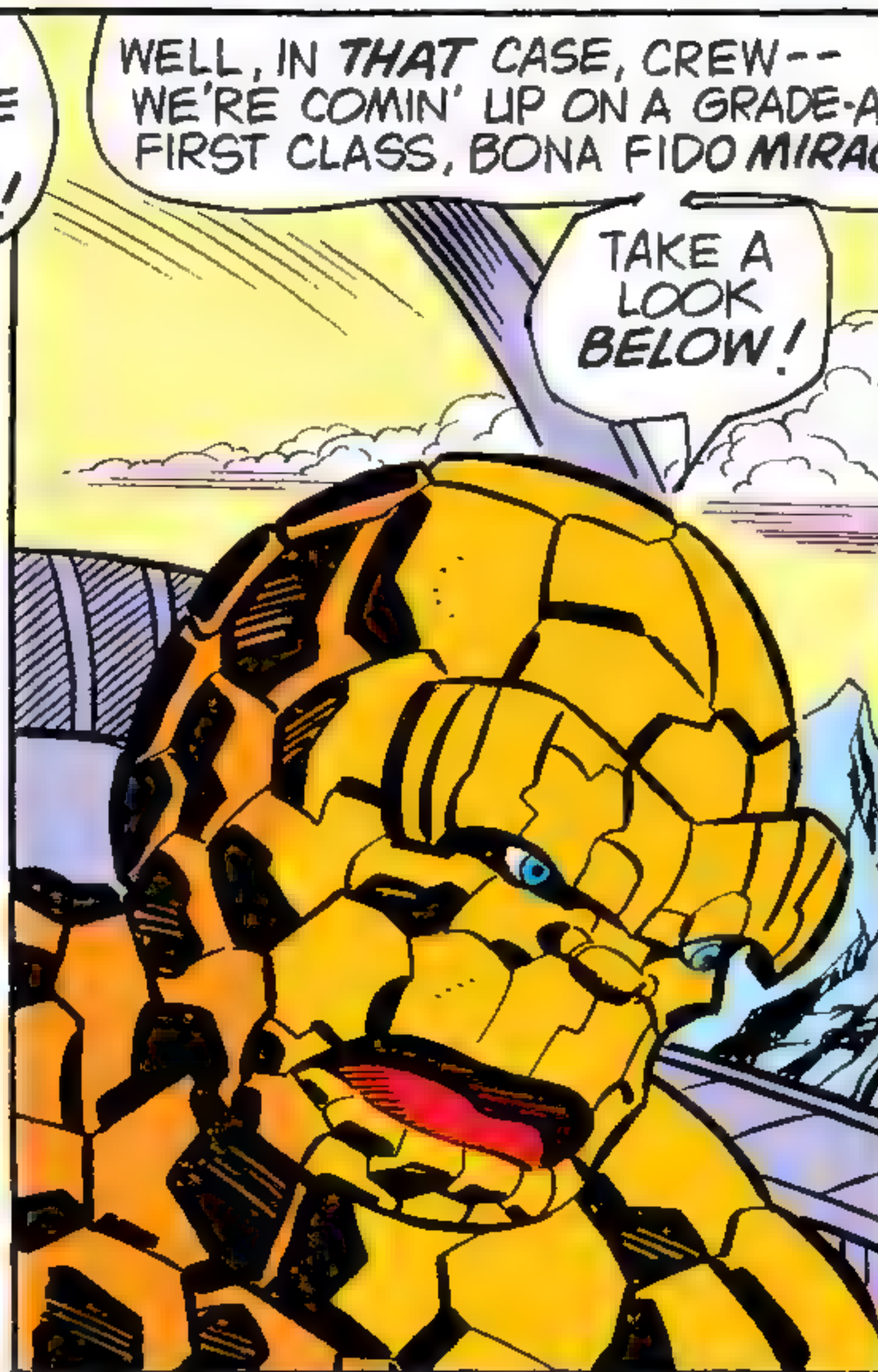


I'M NOT CERTAIN, JOHNNY-- BUT WE'RE IN THE PROPER AREA. THERE SHOULD BE A TOWN OF SOME SORT INDICATED ON THE MAP!

MAYBE THERE SHOULD BE, REED-- BUT THERE ISN'T!

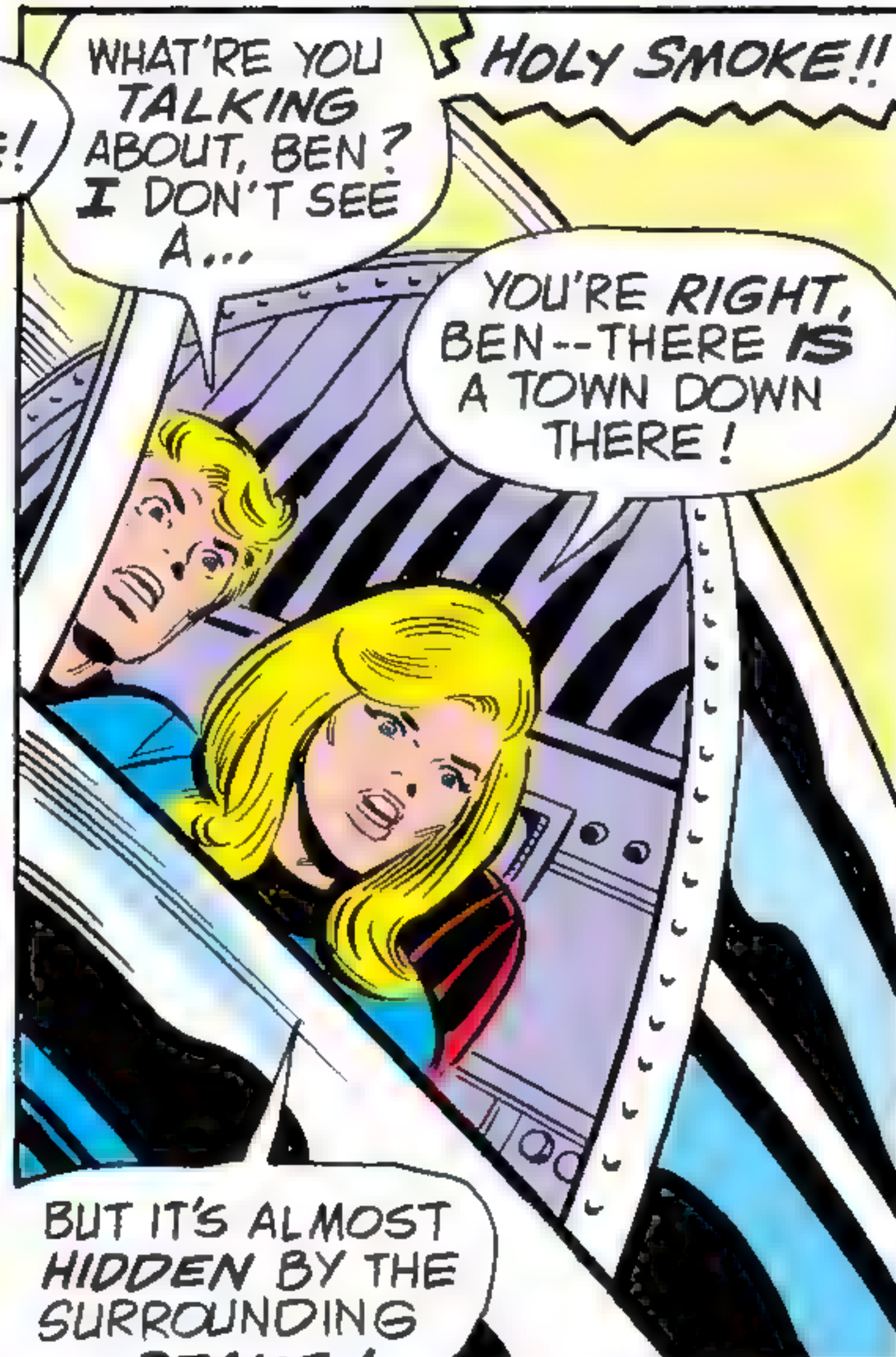
ALL I CAN SEE HERE IS AN OCCASIONAL MOUNTAIN GOAT!

WHAT--?!?



WELL, IN THAT CASE, CREW-- WE'RE COMIN' UP ON A GRADE-A, FIRST CLASS, BONA FIDO MIRAGE!

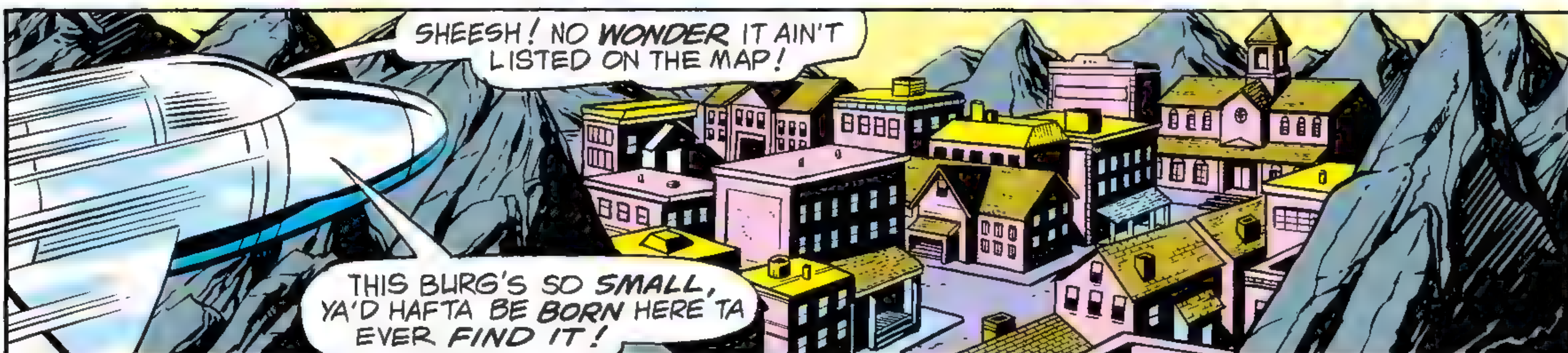
TAKE A LOOK BELOW!



WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BEN? I DON'T SEE A...

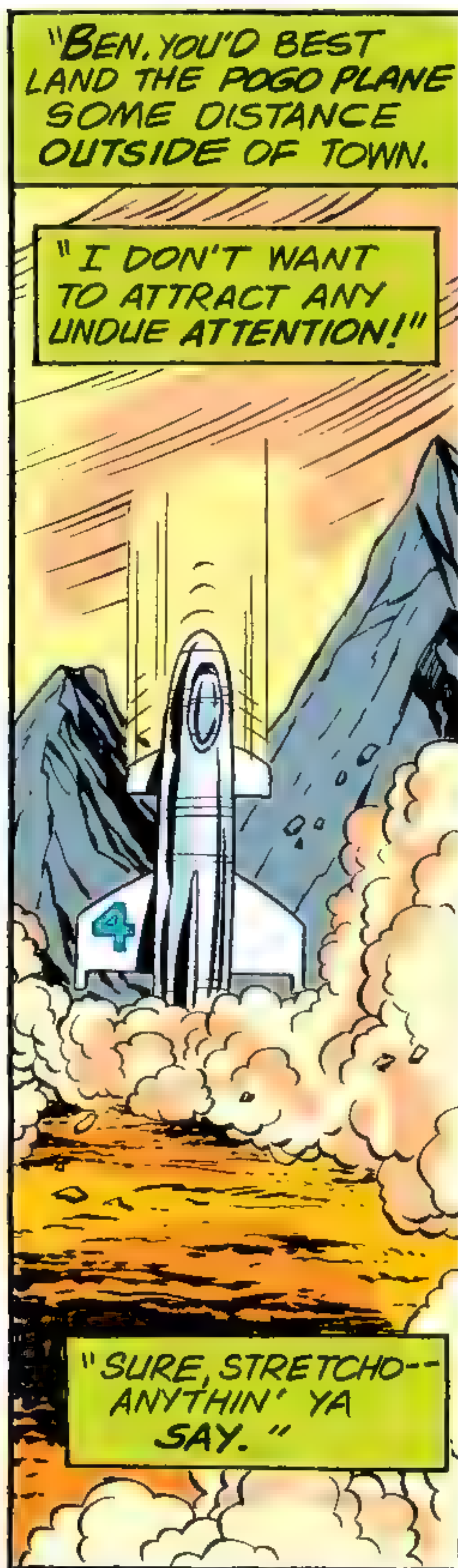
HOLY SMOKE!!
YOU'RE RIGHT, BEN-- THERE IS A TOWN DOWN THERE!

BUT IT'S ALMOST HIDDEN BY THE SURROUNDING PEAKS!



SHEESH! NO WONDER IT AIN'T LISTED ON THE MAP!

THIS BURG'S SO SMALL, YA'D HAFTA BE BORN HERE TA EVER FIND IT!



"BEN, YOU'D BEST LAND THE POGO PLANE SOME DISTANCE OUTSIDE OF TOWN."

"I DON'T WANT TO ATTRACT ANY UNLQUE ATTENTION!"

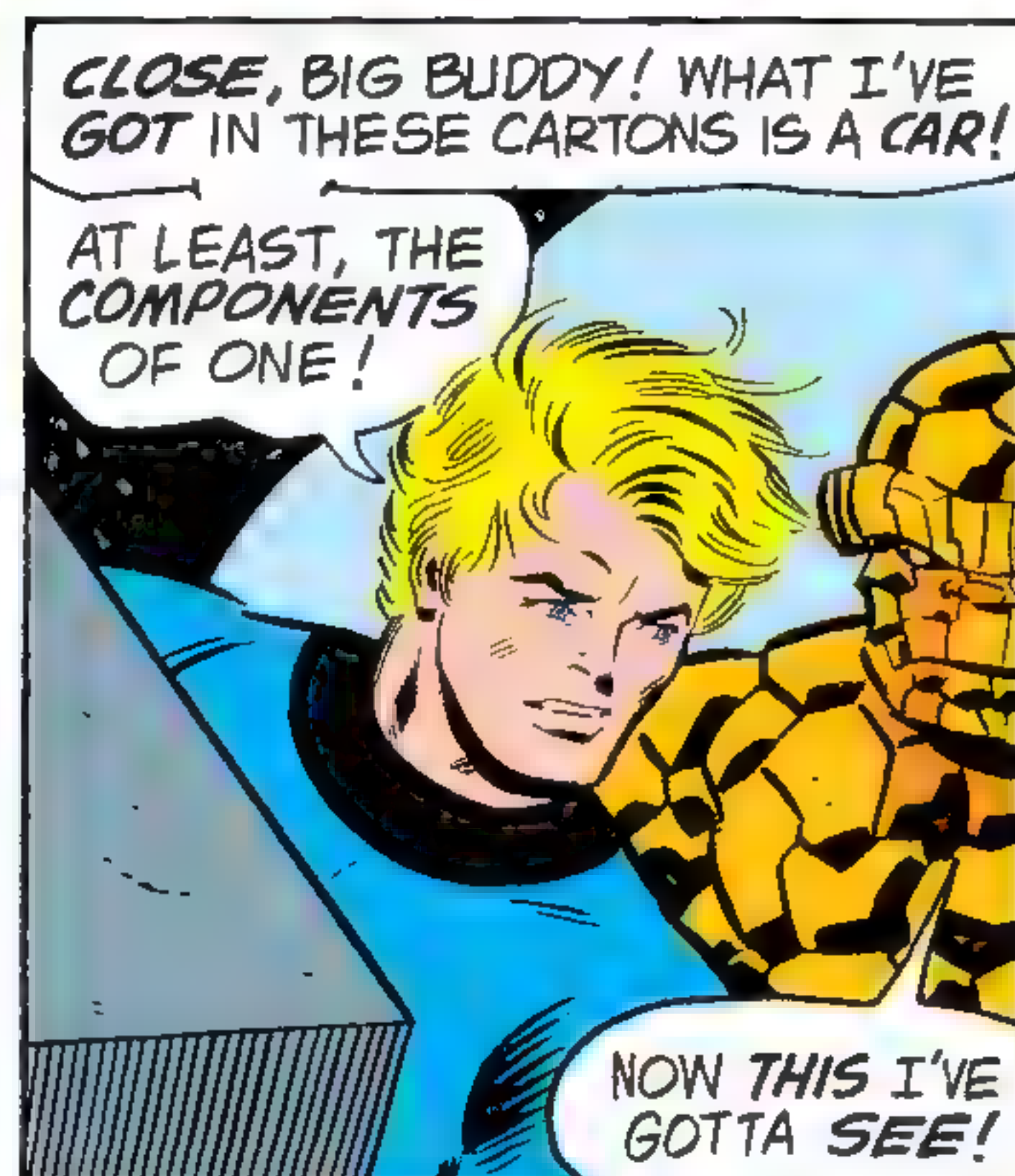
"SURE, STRETCH-- ANYTHIN' YA SAY."



ARE WE GOING TO WALK TO TOWN IN THIS BRUTAL WINDSTORM, REED?

NOT IF BENJY'LL GIVE ME A HAND WITH THESE BOXES, SIS.

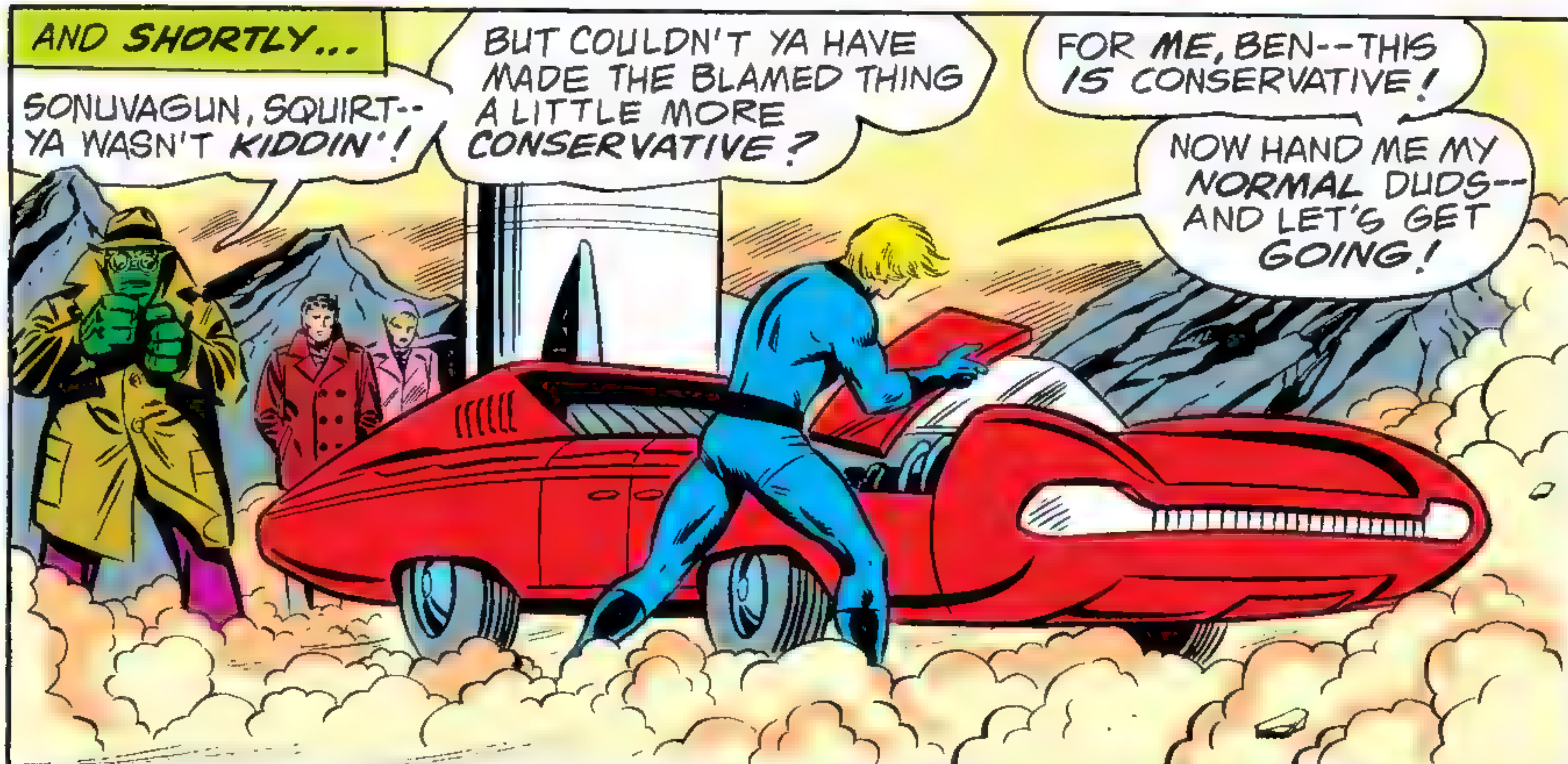
WHY, HOTSHOT-- YA GOT A HORSE-'N'-BUGGY STASHED IN ONE'A THEM THINGS?



CLOSE, BIG BUDDY! WHAT I'VE GOT IN THESE CARTONS IS A CAR!

AT LEAST, THE COMPONENTS OF ONE!

NOW THIS I'VE GOTTA SEE!

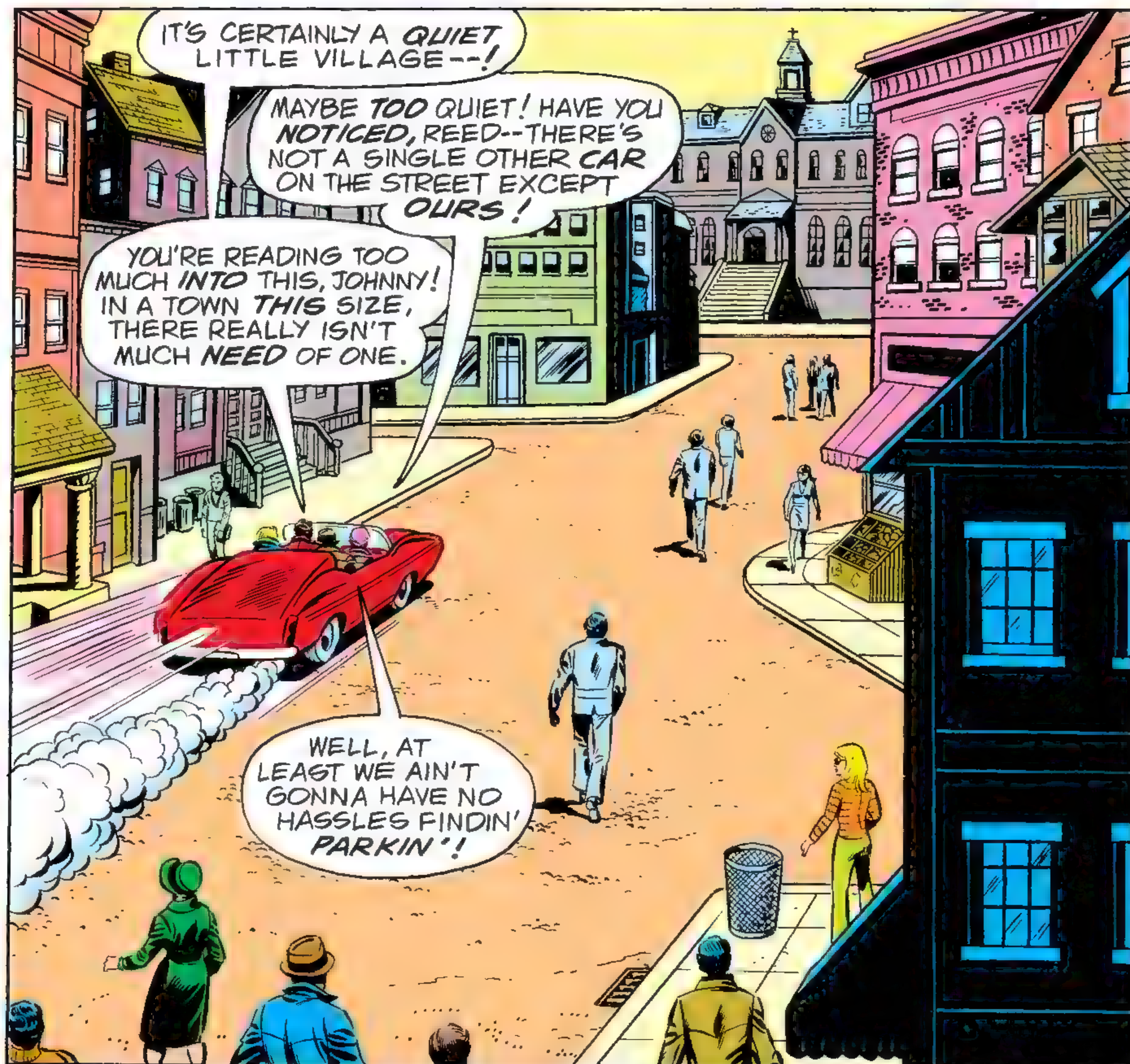
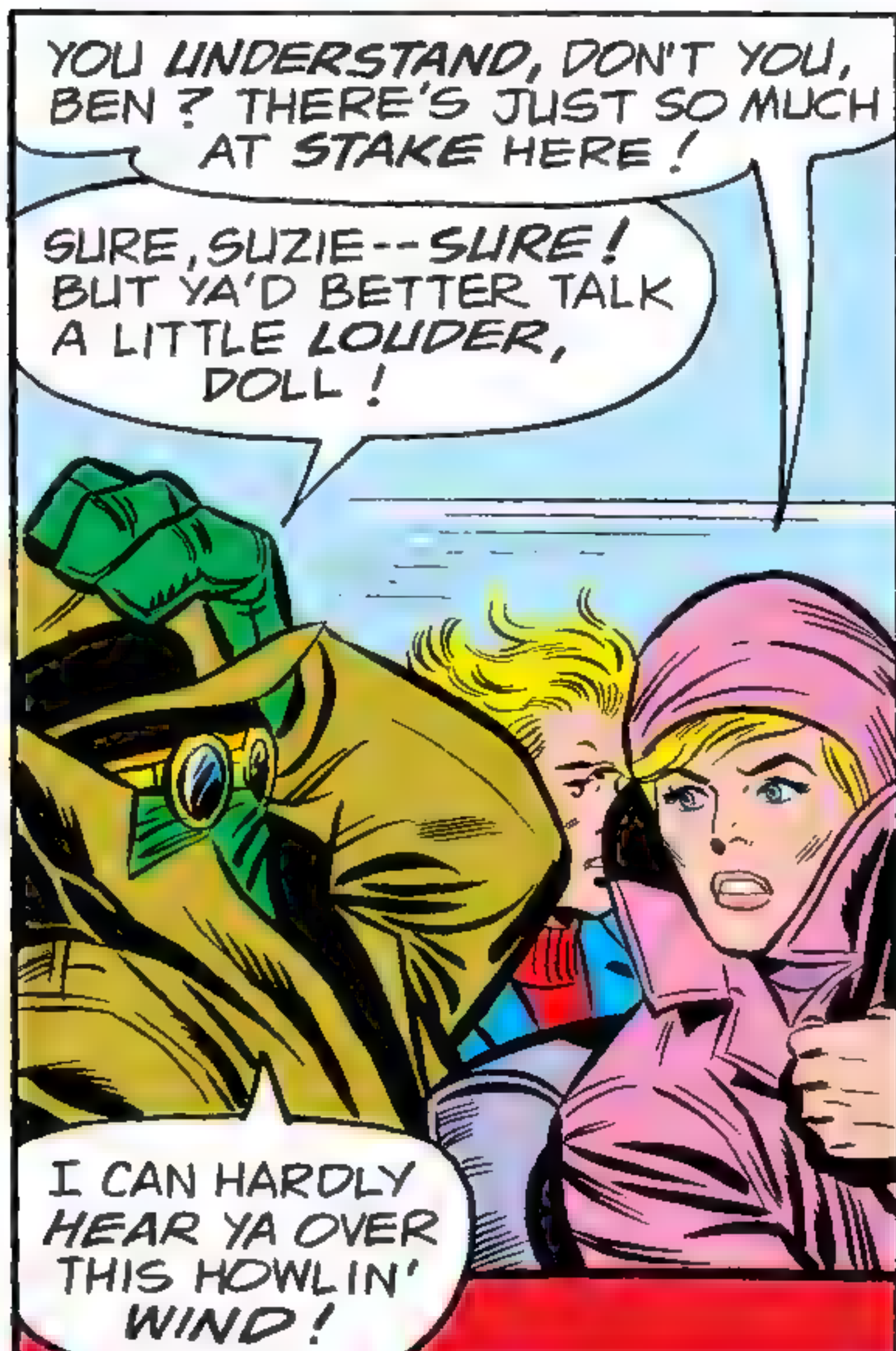
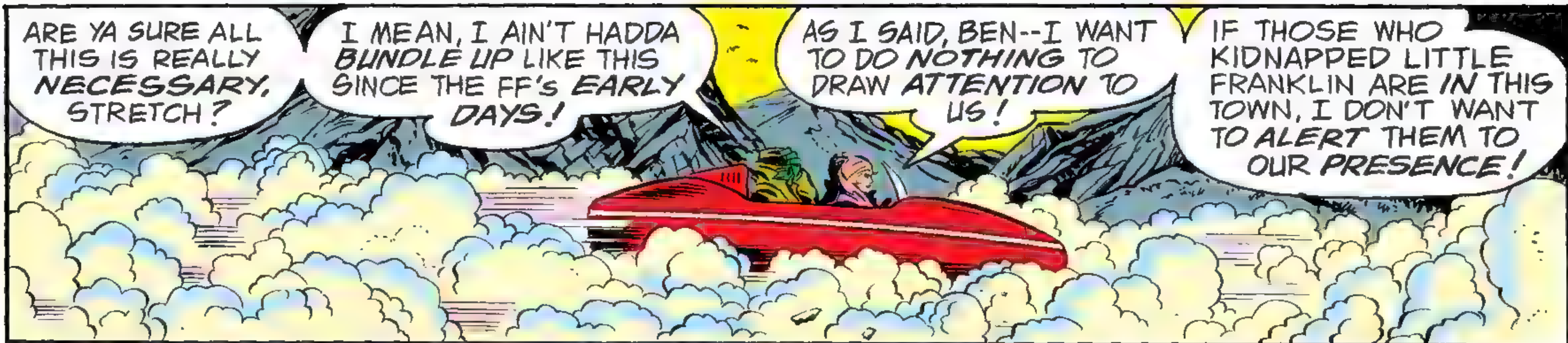


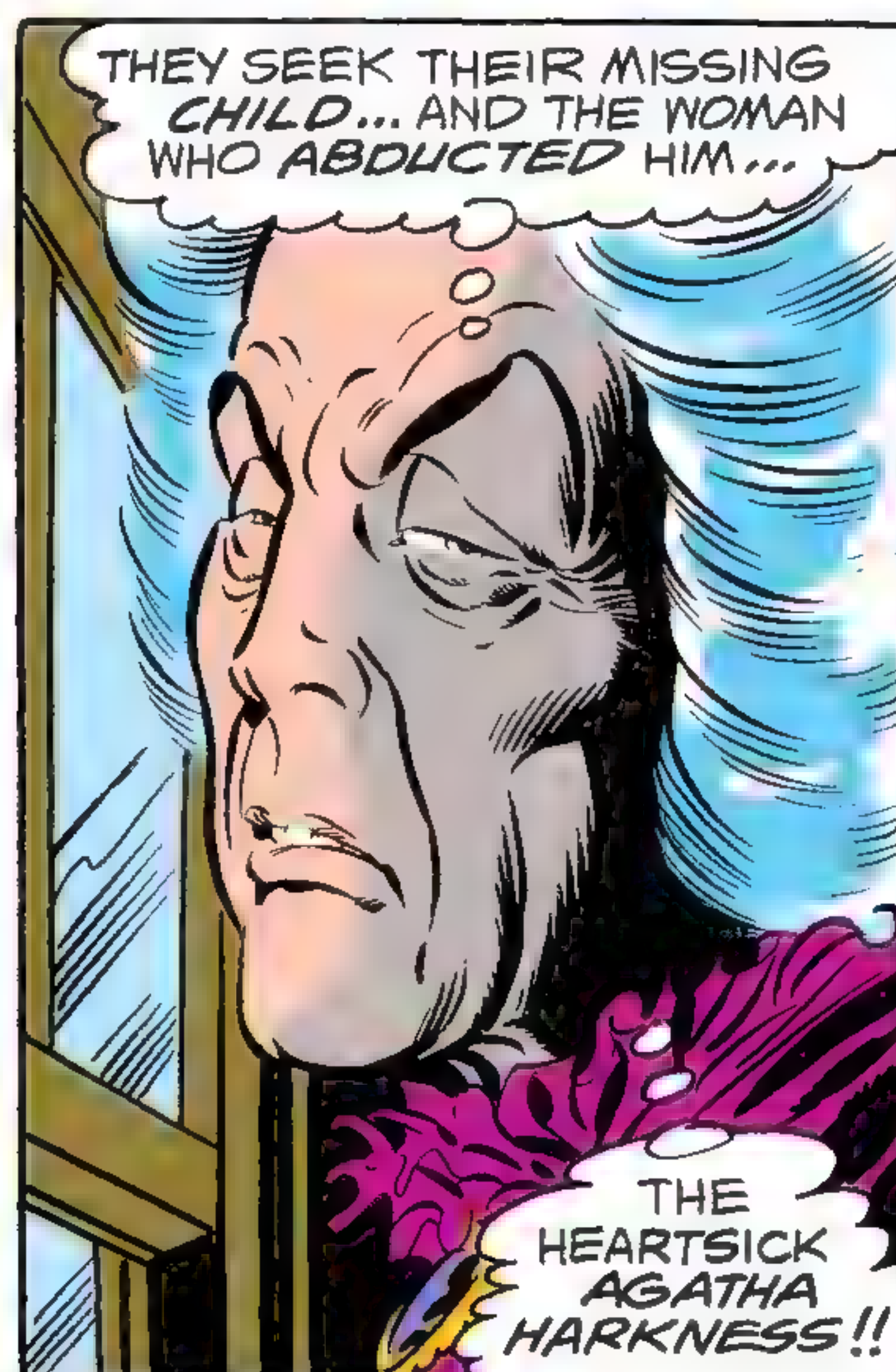
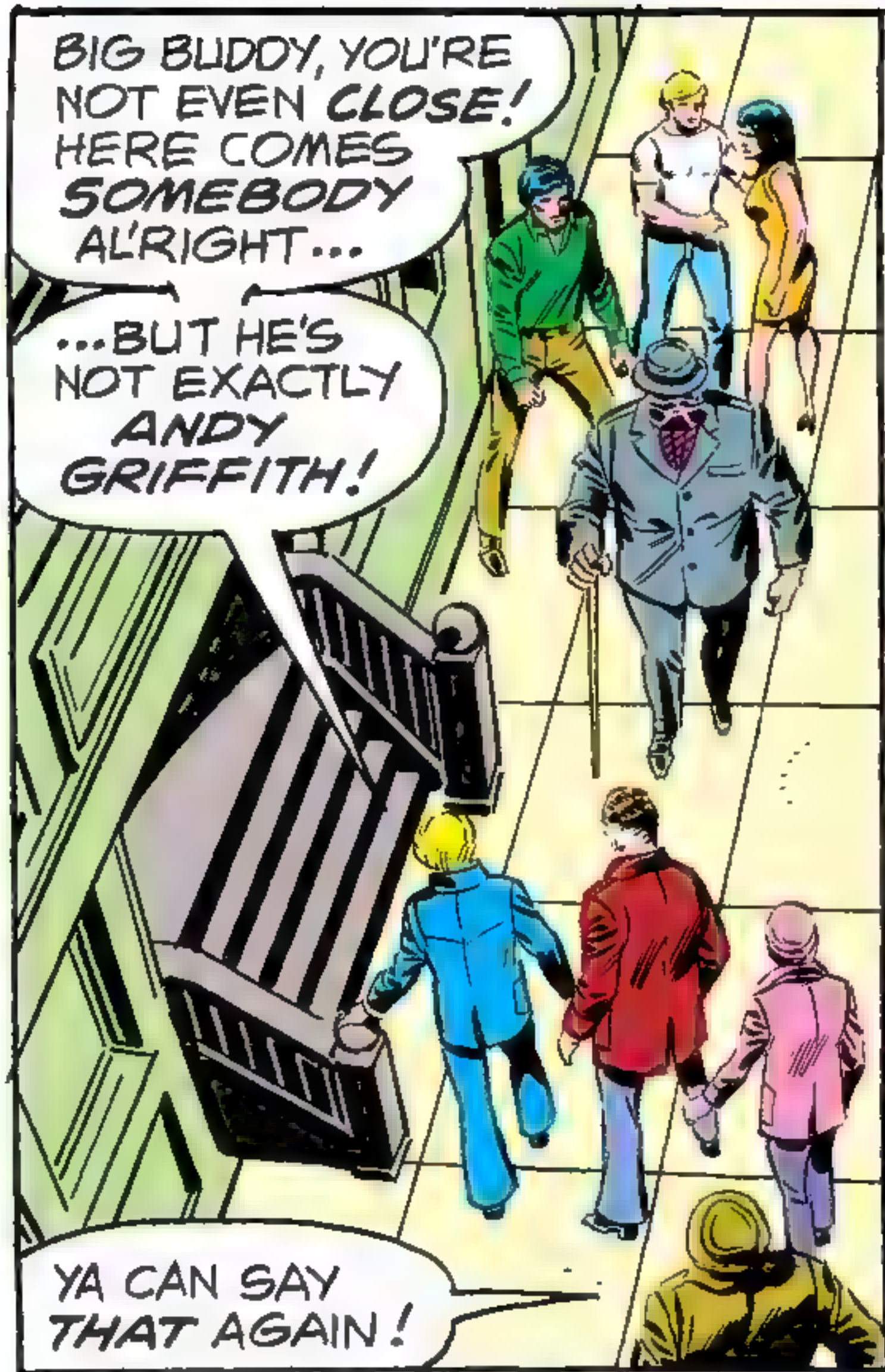
AND SHORTLY...
SONUVAGUN, SQUIRT-- YA WASN'T KIDDIN'!

BUT COULDN'T YA HAVE MADE THE BLAMED THING A LITTLE MORE CONSERVATIVE?

FOR ME, BEN-- THIS IS CONSERVATIVE!

NOW HAND ME MY NORMAL DUDS-- AND LET'S GET GOING!



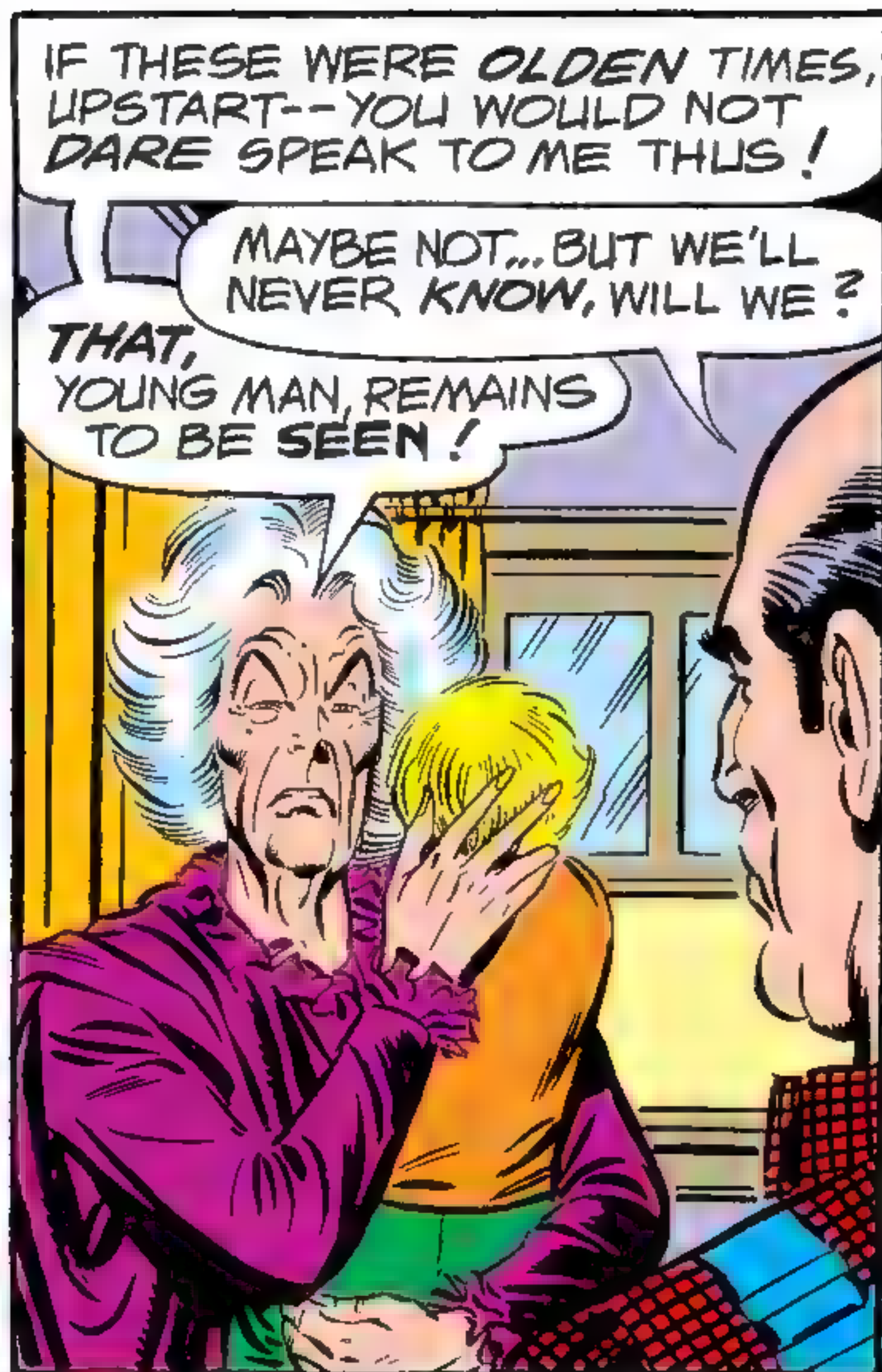




SOMEHOW I MUST... EH?

THE BRAT IS CRYING AGAIN, OLD WOMAN! EITHER YOU KEEP HIM QUIET...

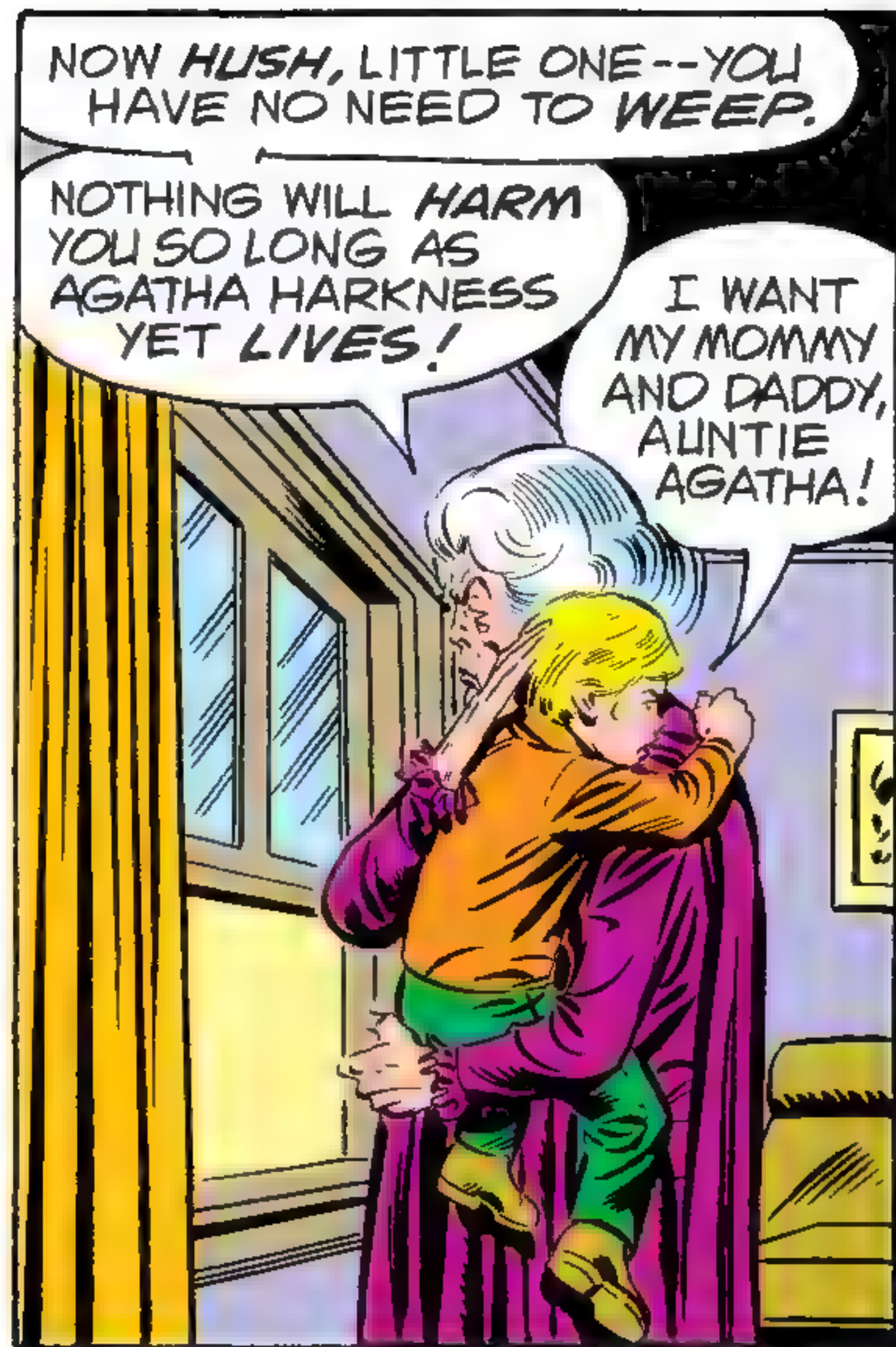
...OR I WILL!!



IF THESE WERE OLDEN TIMES, UPSTART--YOU WOULD NOT DARE SPEAK TO ME THUS!

MAYBE NOT... BUT WE'LL NEVER KNOW, WILL WE?

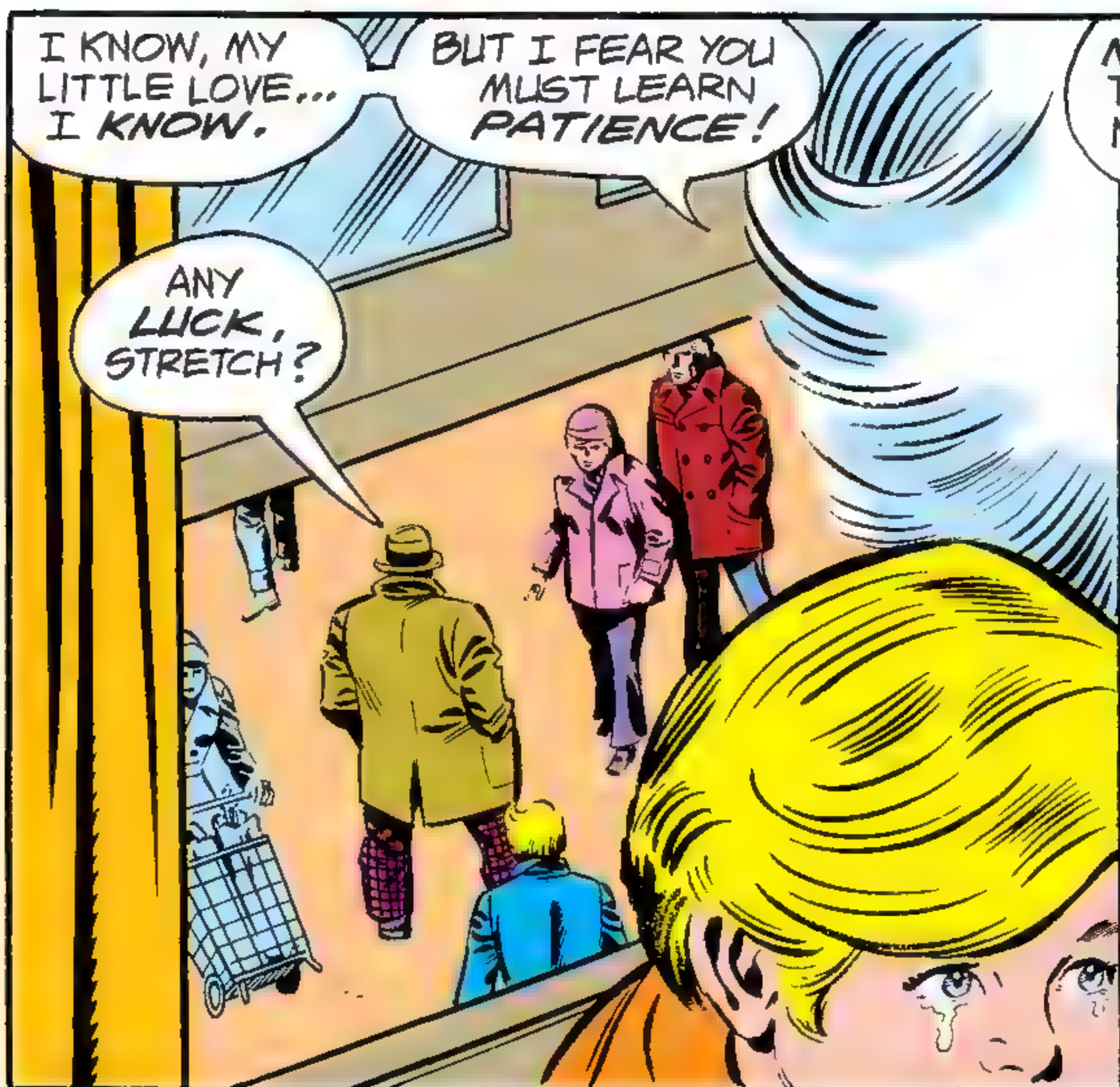
THAT, YOUNG MAN, REMAINS TO BE SEEN!



NOW HUSH, LITTLE ONE--YOU HAVE NO NEED TO WEEP.

NOTHING WILL HARM YOU SO LONG AS AGATHA HARKNESS YET LIVES!

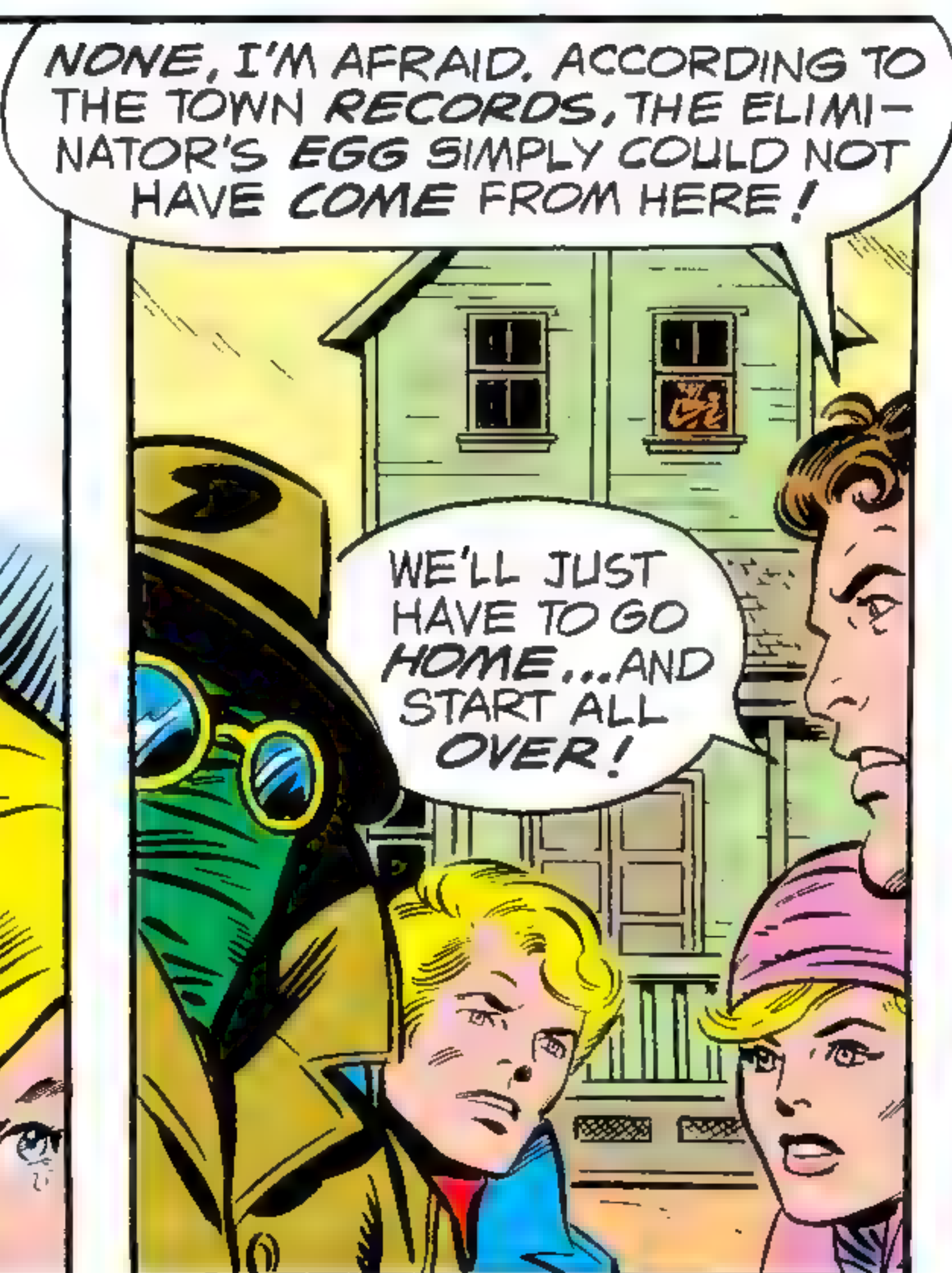
I WANT MY MOMMY AND DADDY, AUNTIE AGATHA!



I KNOW, MY LITTLE LOVE... I KNOW.

BUT I FEAR YOU MUST LEARN PATIENCE!

ANY LUCK, STRETCH?

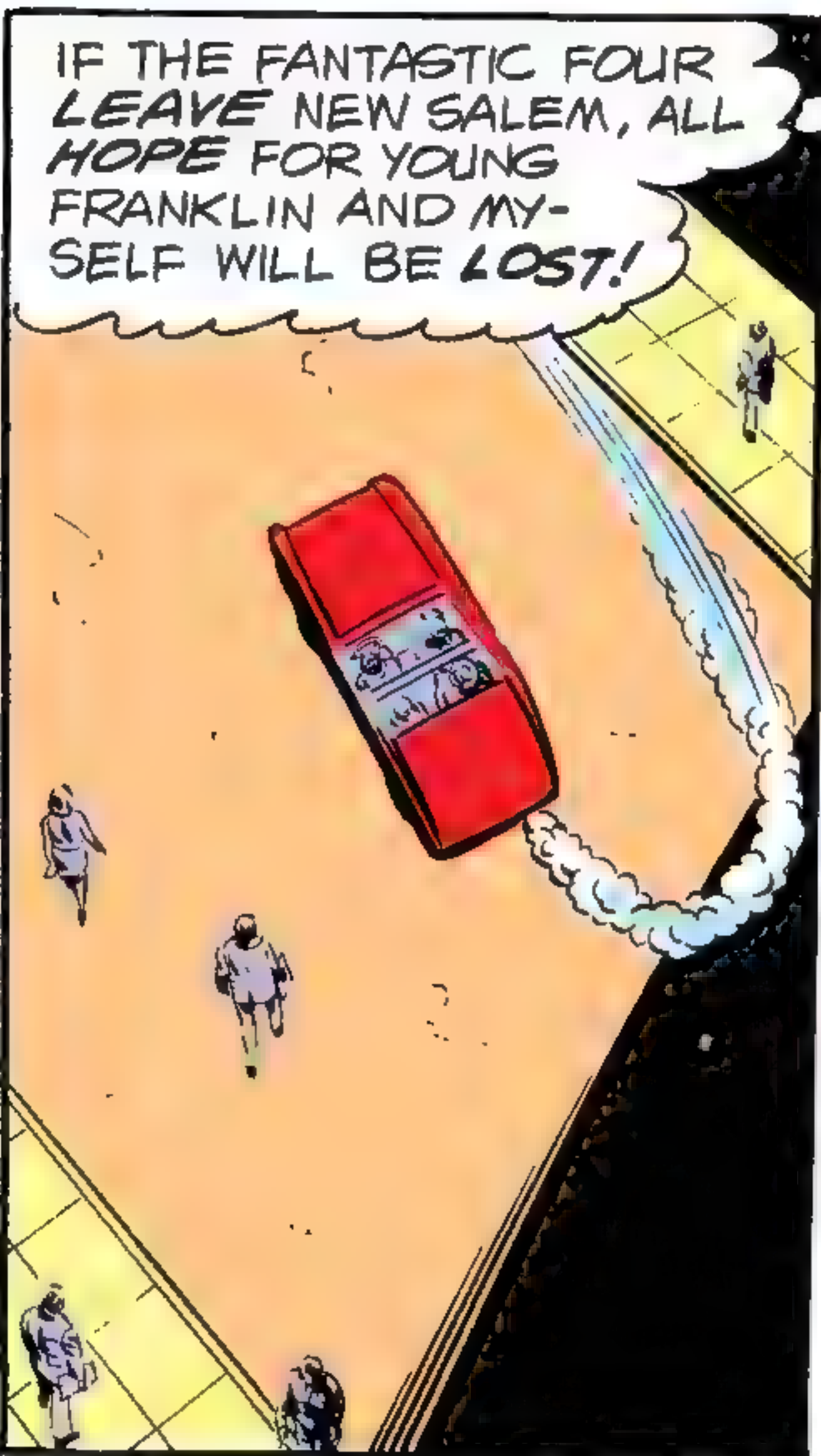


NONE, I'M AFRAID. ACCORDING TO THE TOWN RECORDS, THE ELIMINATOR'S EGG SIMPLY COULD NOT HAVE COME FROM HERE!

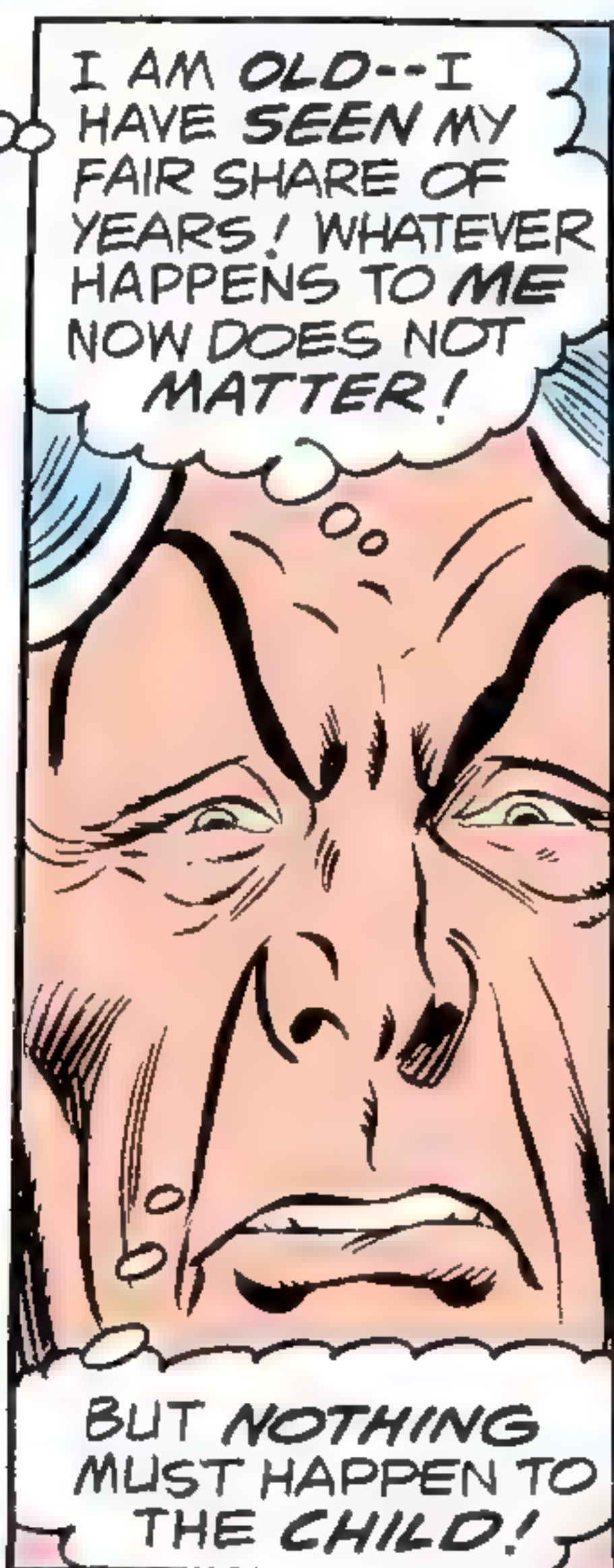
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GO HOME...AND START ALL OVER!



NO! THEY'RE GIVING UP... RETURNING TO THEIR CAR...

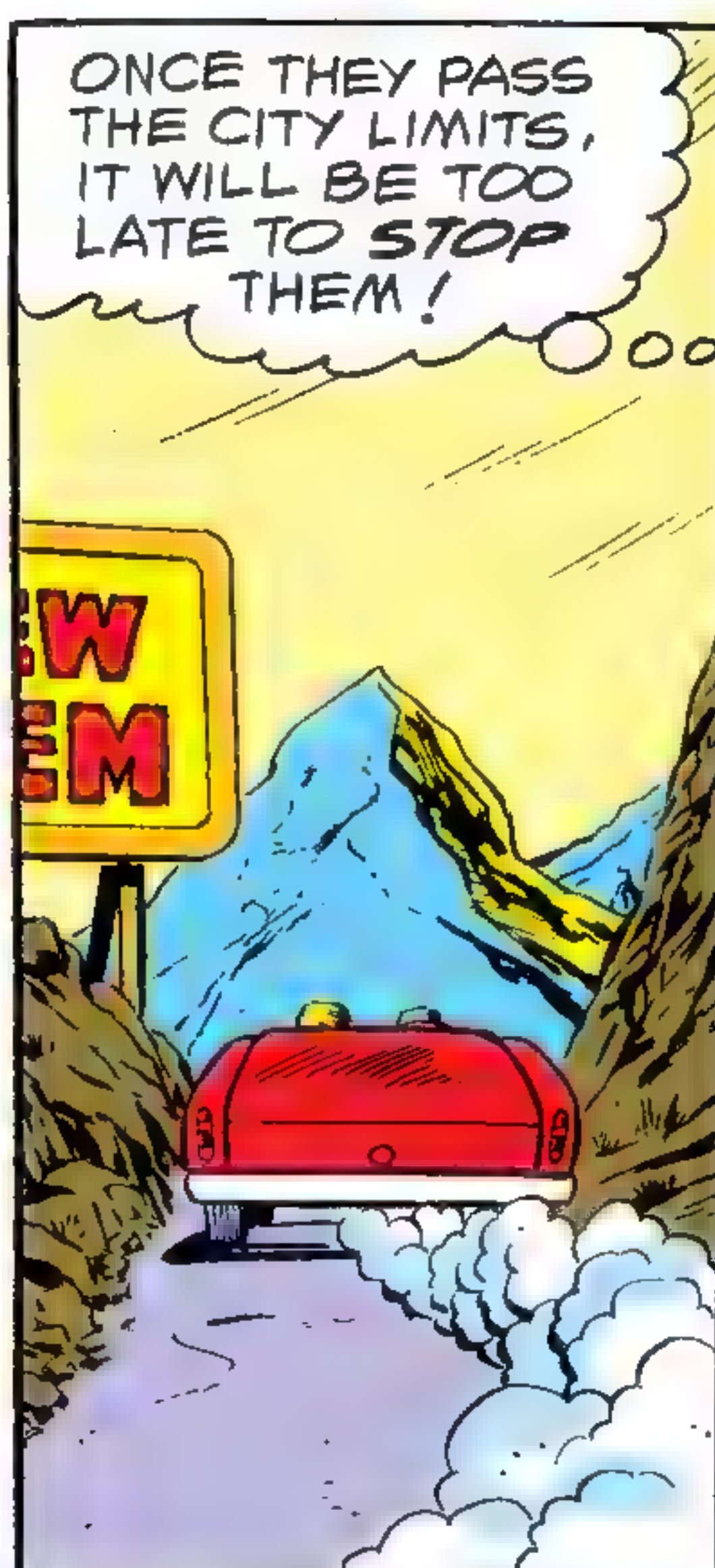


IF THE FANTASTIC FOUR LEAVE NEW SALEM, ALL HOPE FOR YOUNG FRANKLIN AND MY-SELF WILL BE LOST!

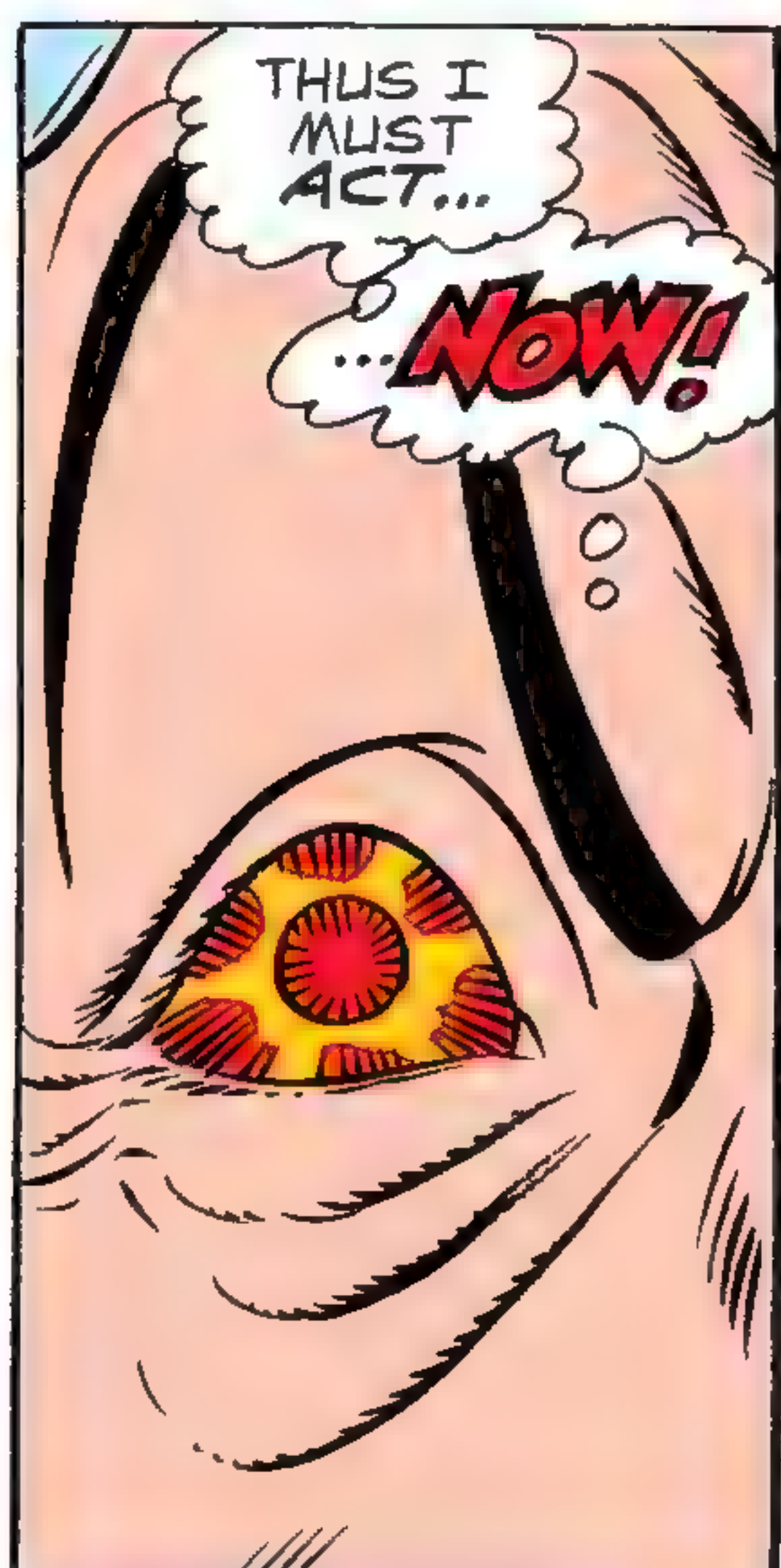


I AM OLD--I HAVE SEEN MY FAIR SHARE OF YEARS! WHATEVER HAPPENS TO ME NOW DOES NOT MATTER!

BUT NOTHING MUST HAPPEN TO THE CHILD!

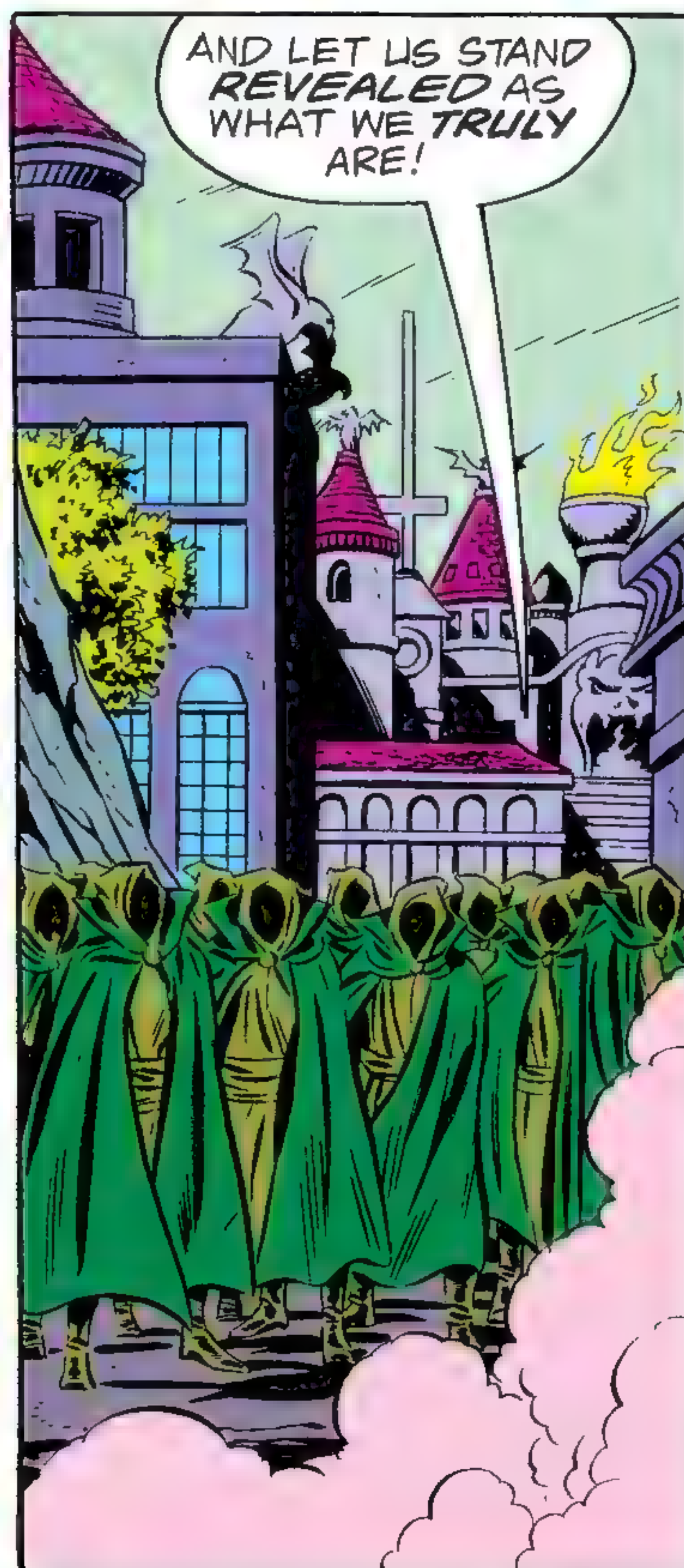
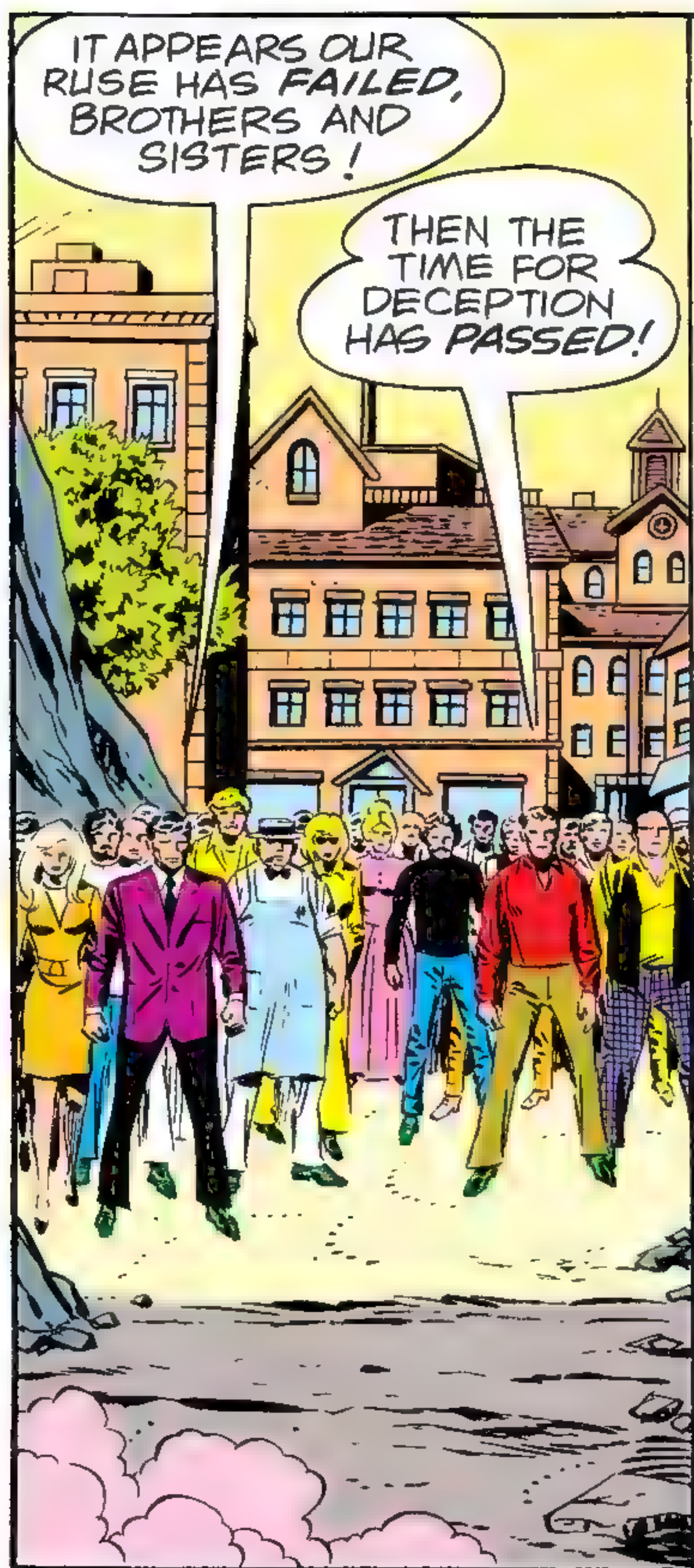
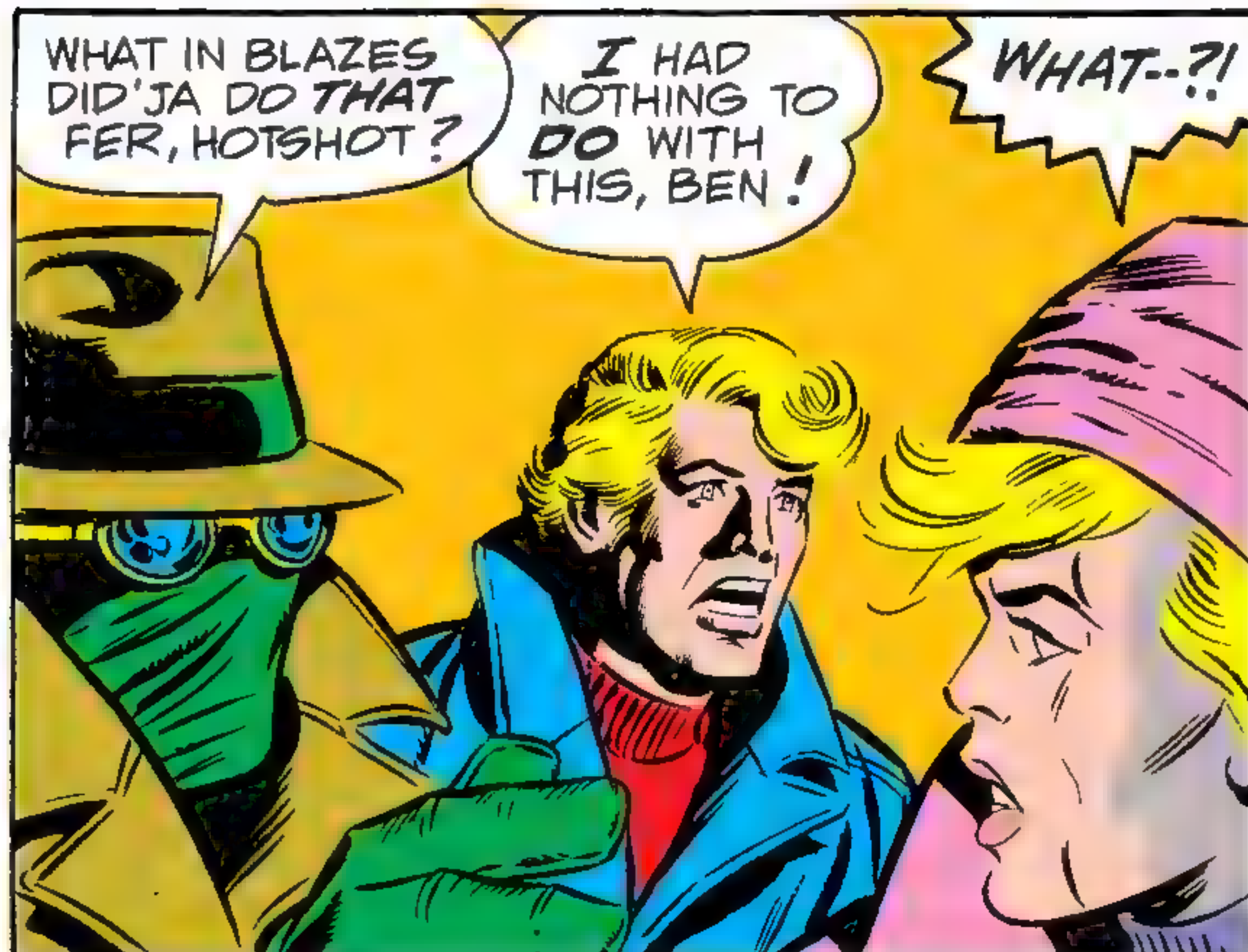


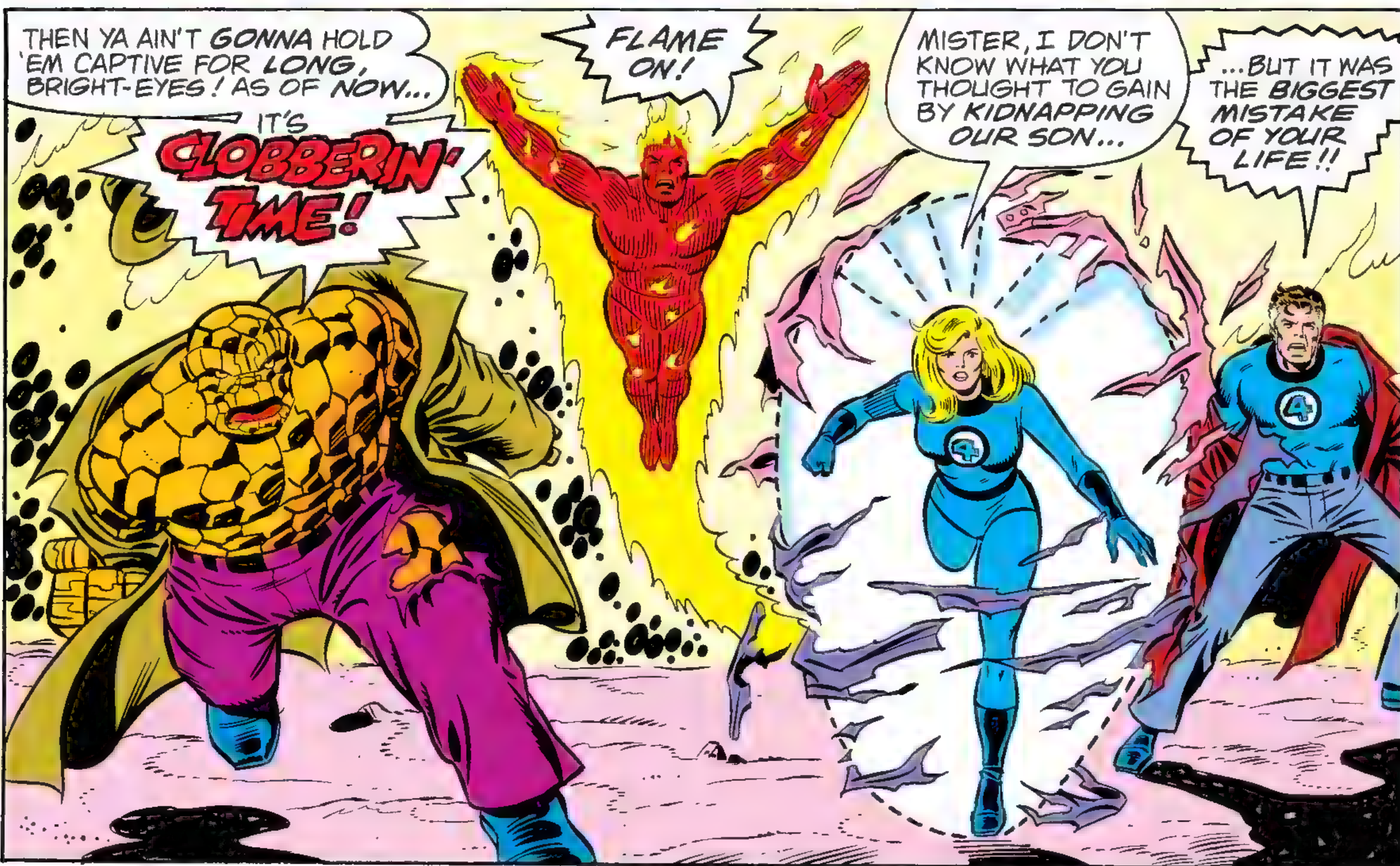
ONCE THEY PASS THE CITY LIMITS, IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO STOP THEM!

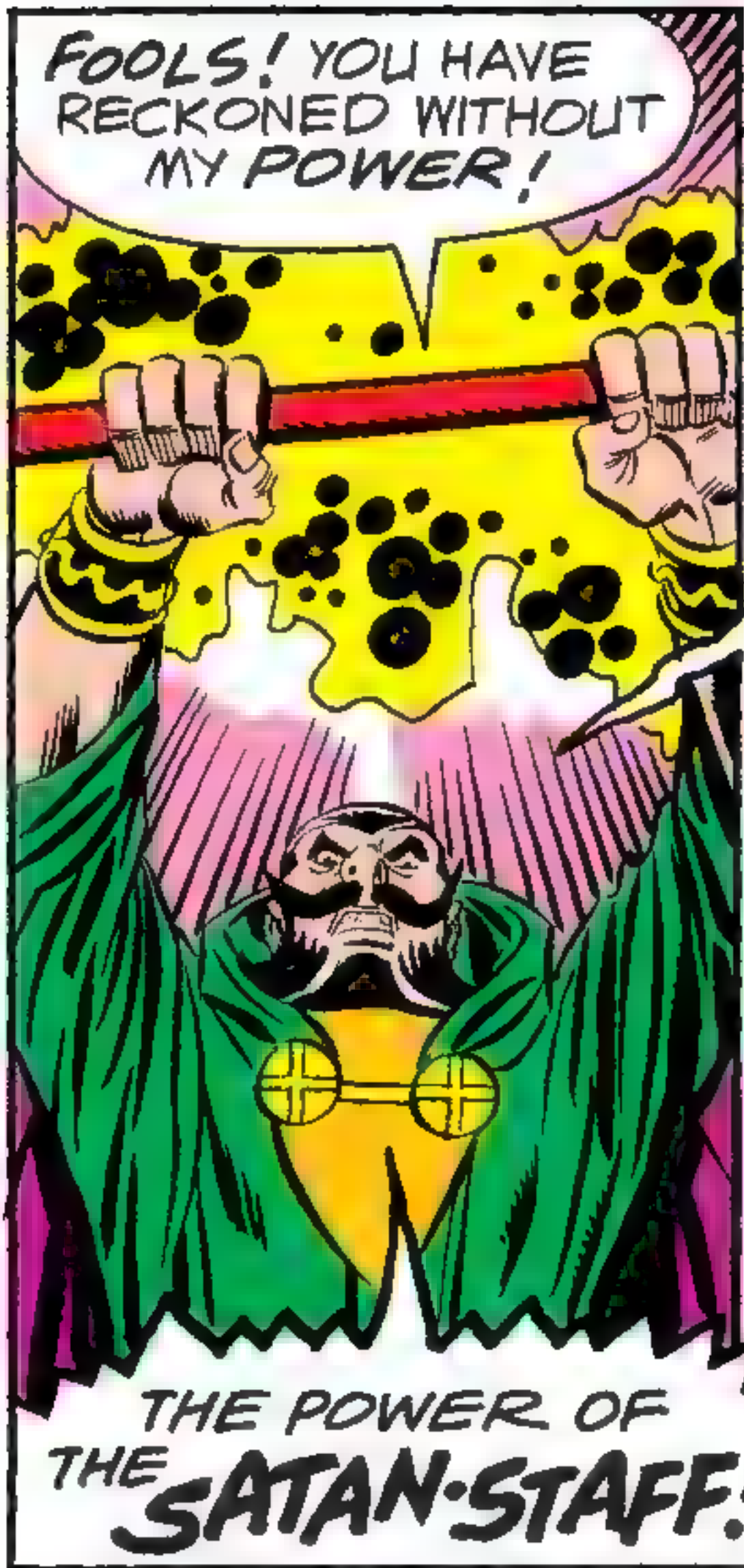


THUS I MUST ACT...

...NOW!

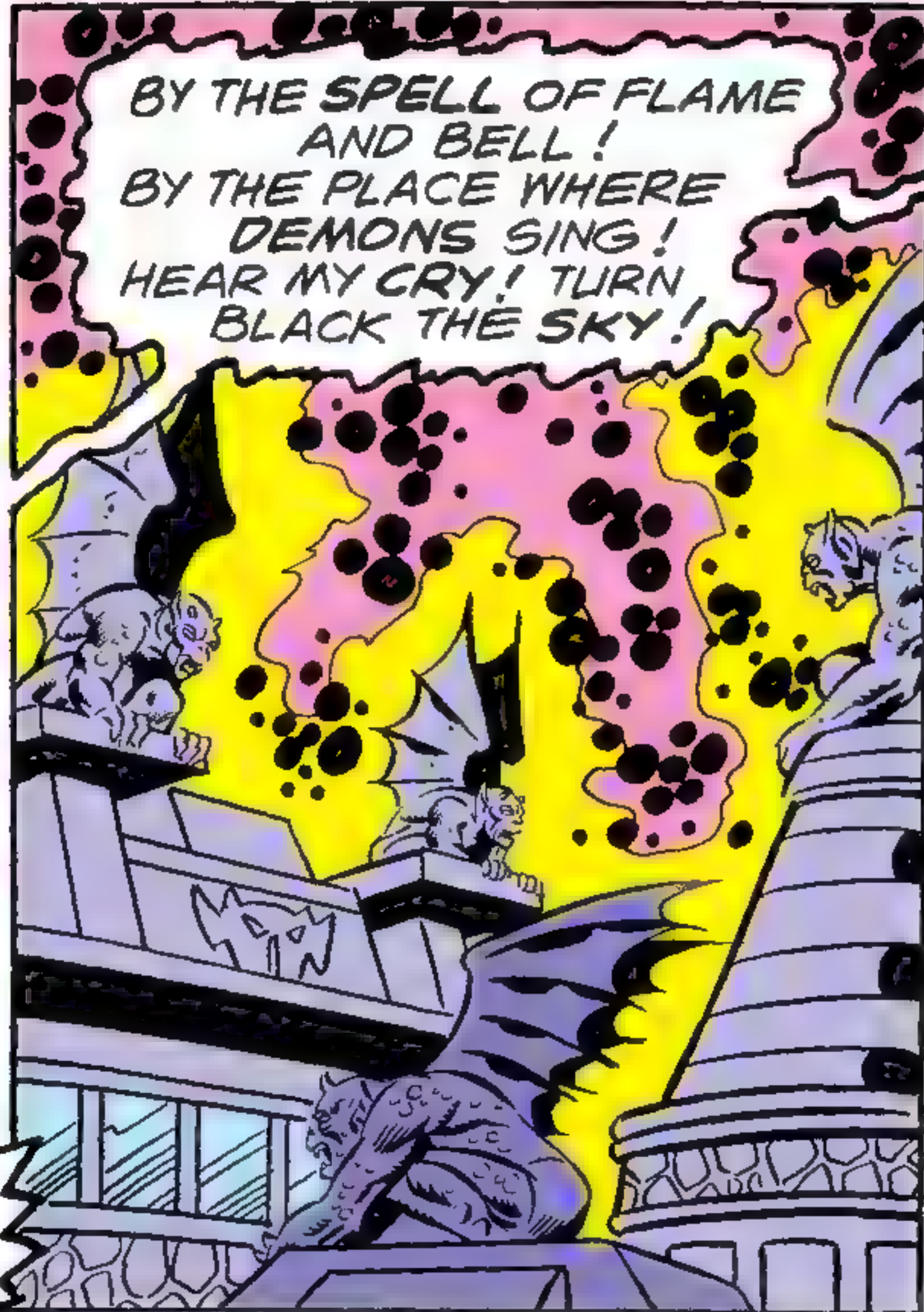




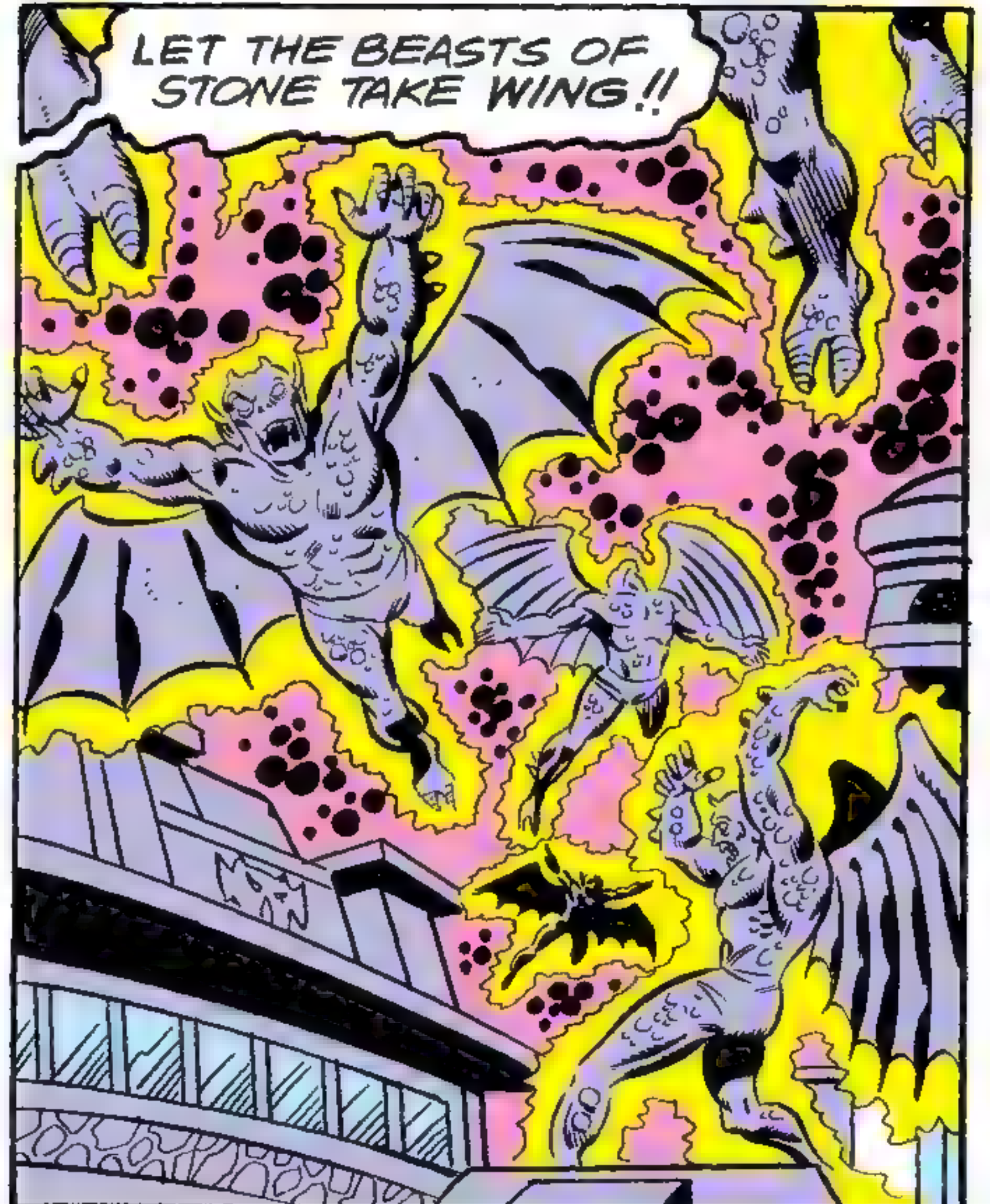


FOOLS! YOU HAVE RECKONED WITHOUT MY POWER!

THE POWER OF THE **SATAN-STAFF!**



BY THE SPELL OF FLAME AND BELL!
BY THE PLACE WHERE DEMONS SING!
HEAR MY CRY! TURN BLACK THE SKY!



LET THE BEASTS OF STONE TAKE WING!!



FLY, MY CHILDREN-- FLY!!

DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!



SO, YOU KNEW WHO WE WERE ALL ALONG, SCRATCH!

THEN YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW THAT WE WON'T BE TAKEN EASILY!

THE FF HAS POWERS OF ITS OWN, MISTER--

--AND WE KNOW HOW TO USE THEM!

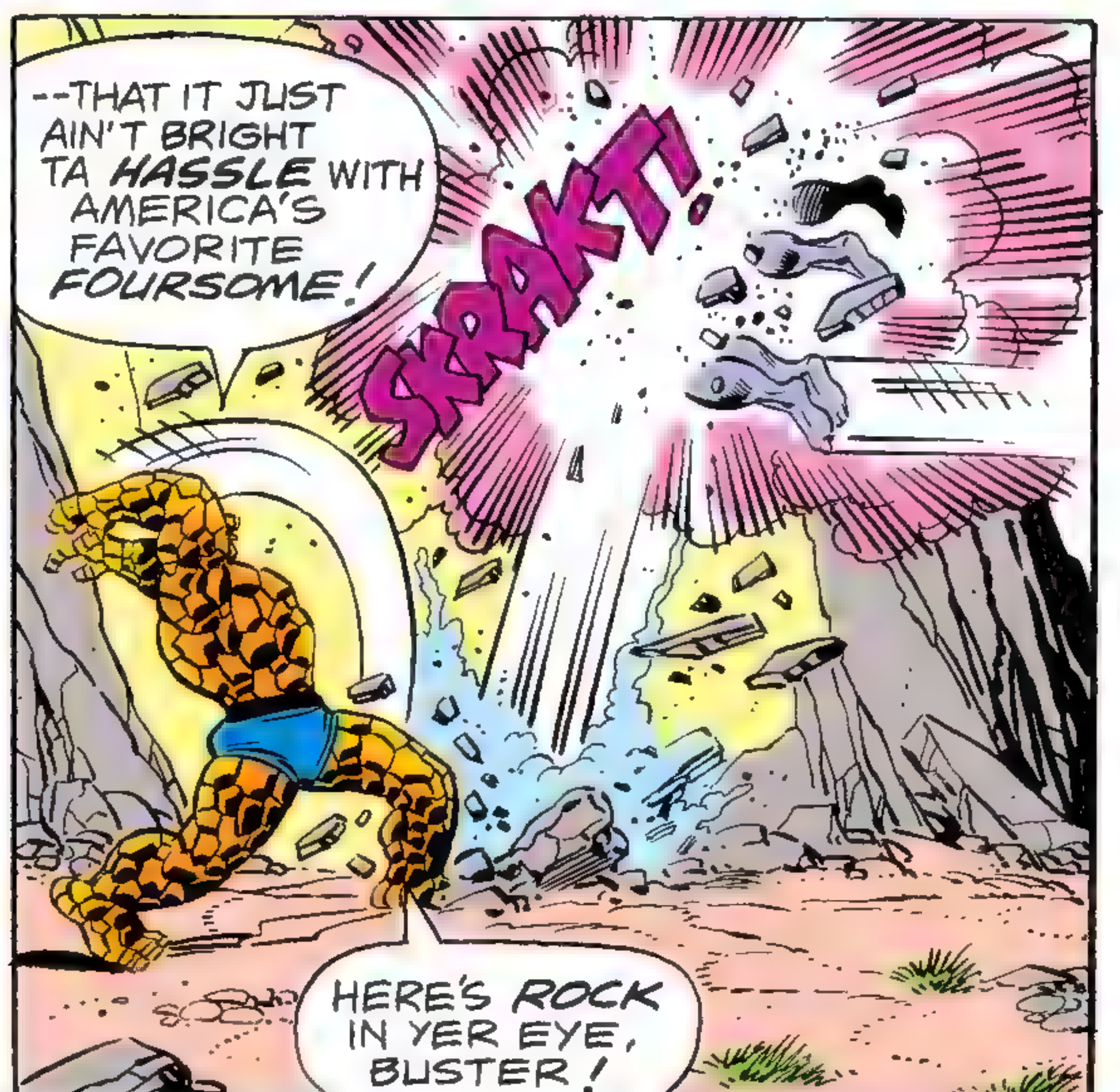


BROK



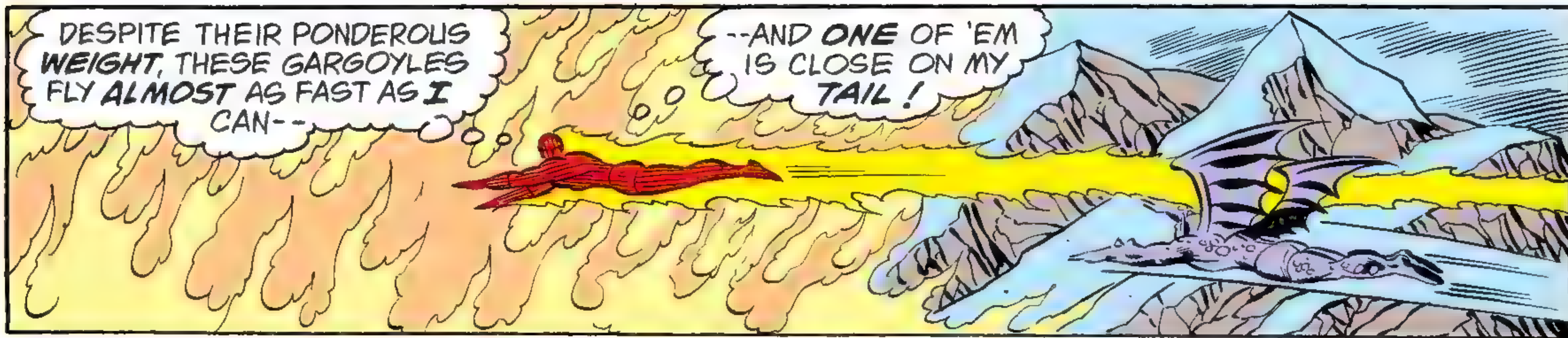
NOW YER SOUNDIN' LIKE THE BIG BRAIN WE USE 'TA KNOW, REED!

WE'LL SHOW THESE BAT-WINGED BOZOS--



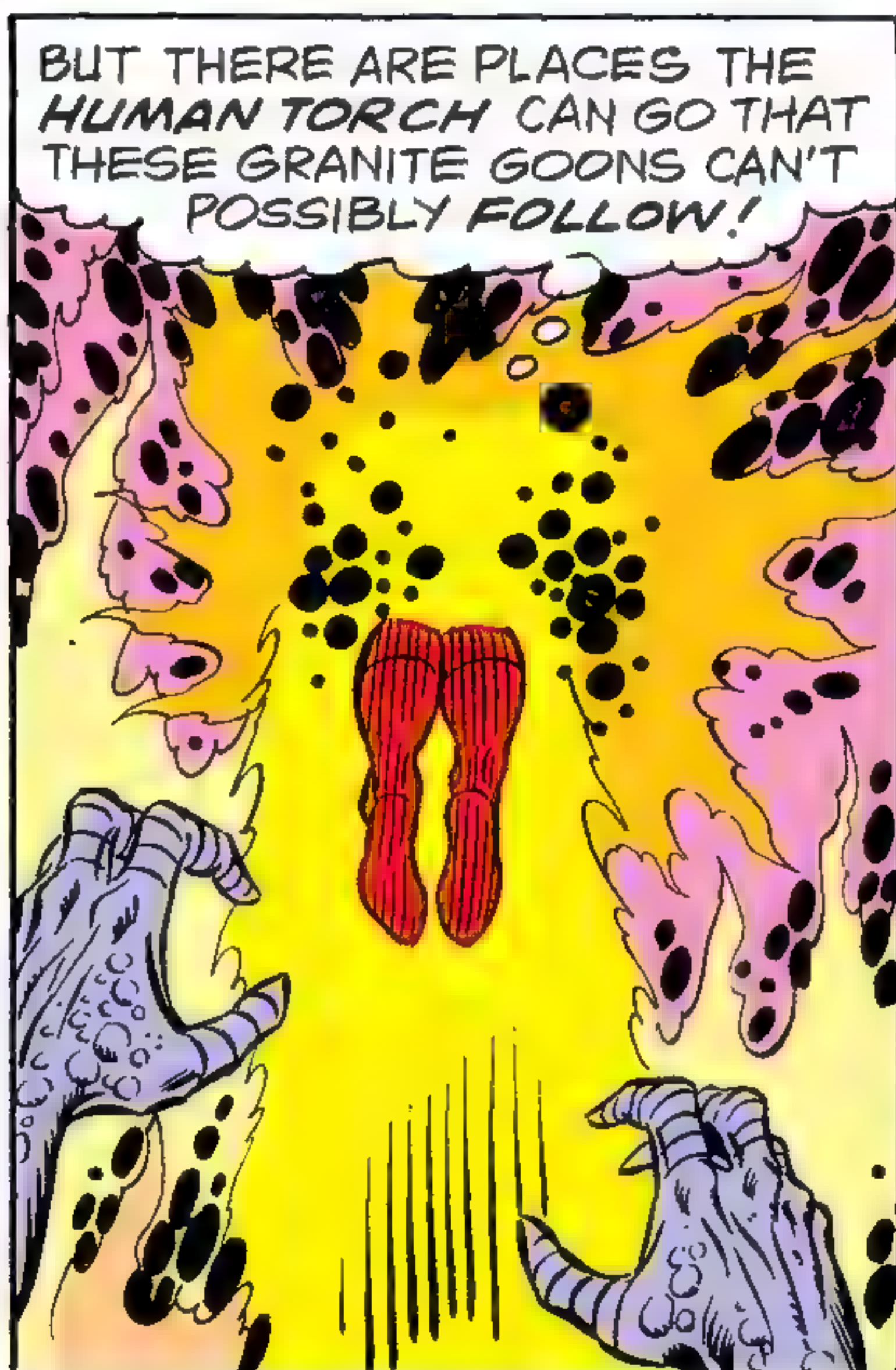
--THAT IT JUST AIN'T BRIGHT TA HASSLE WITH AMERICA'S FAVORITE FOURSOME!

HERE'S ROCK IN YER EYE, BUSTER!

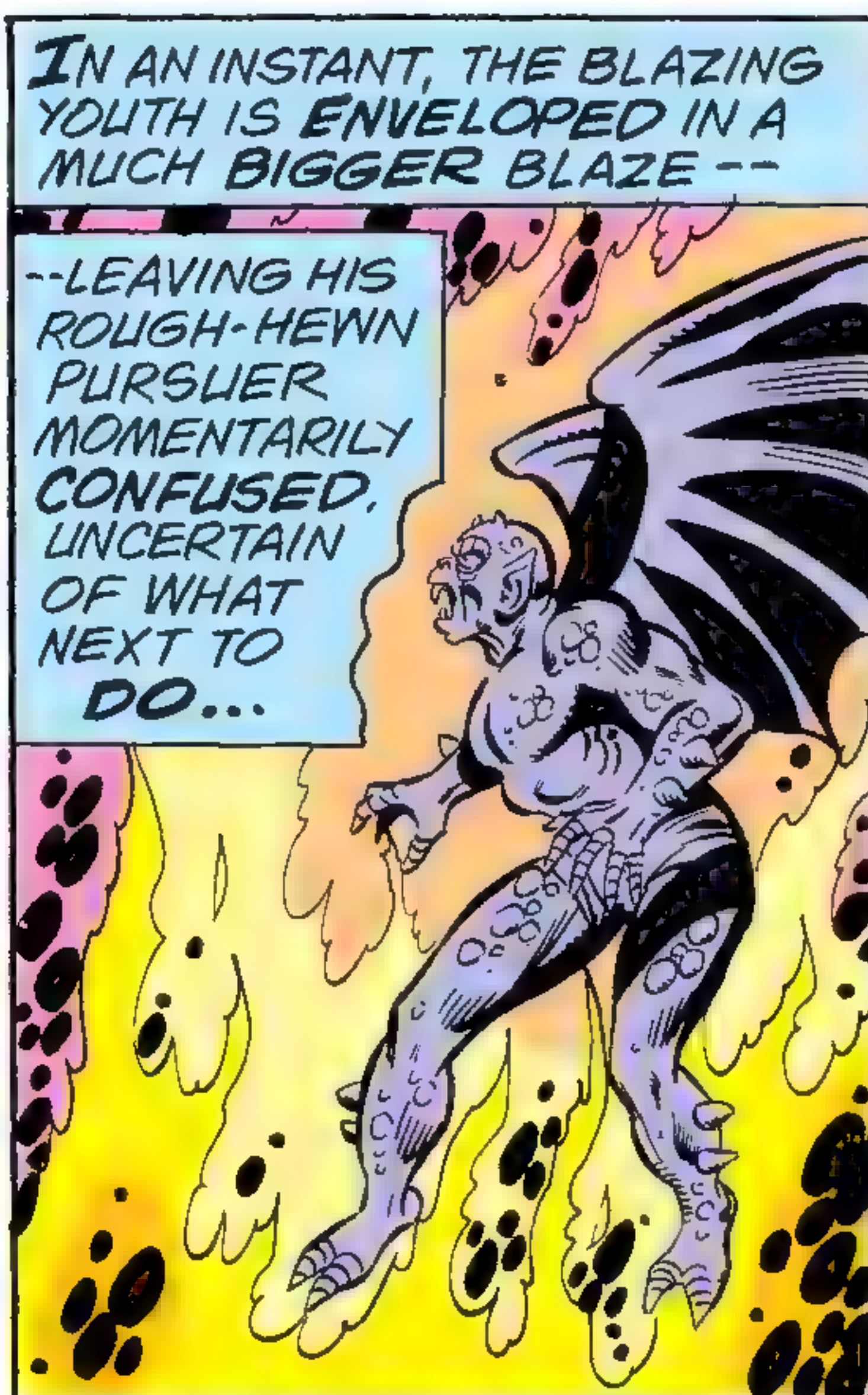


DESPITE THEIR PONDEROUS WEIGHT, THESE GARGOYLES FLY ALMOST AS FAST AS I CAN--

--AND ONE OF 'EM IS CLOSE ON MY TAIL!



BUT THERE ARE PLACES THE HUMAN TORCH CAN GO THAT THESE GRANITE GOONS CAN'T POSSIBLY FOLLOW!



IN AN INSTANT, THE BLAZING YOUTH IS ENVELOPED IN A MUCH BIGGER BLAZE--

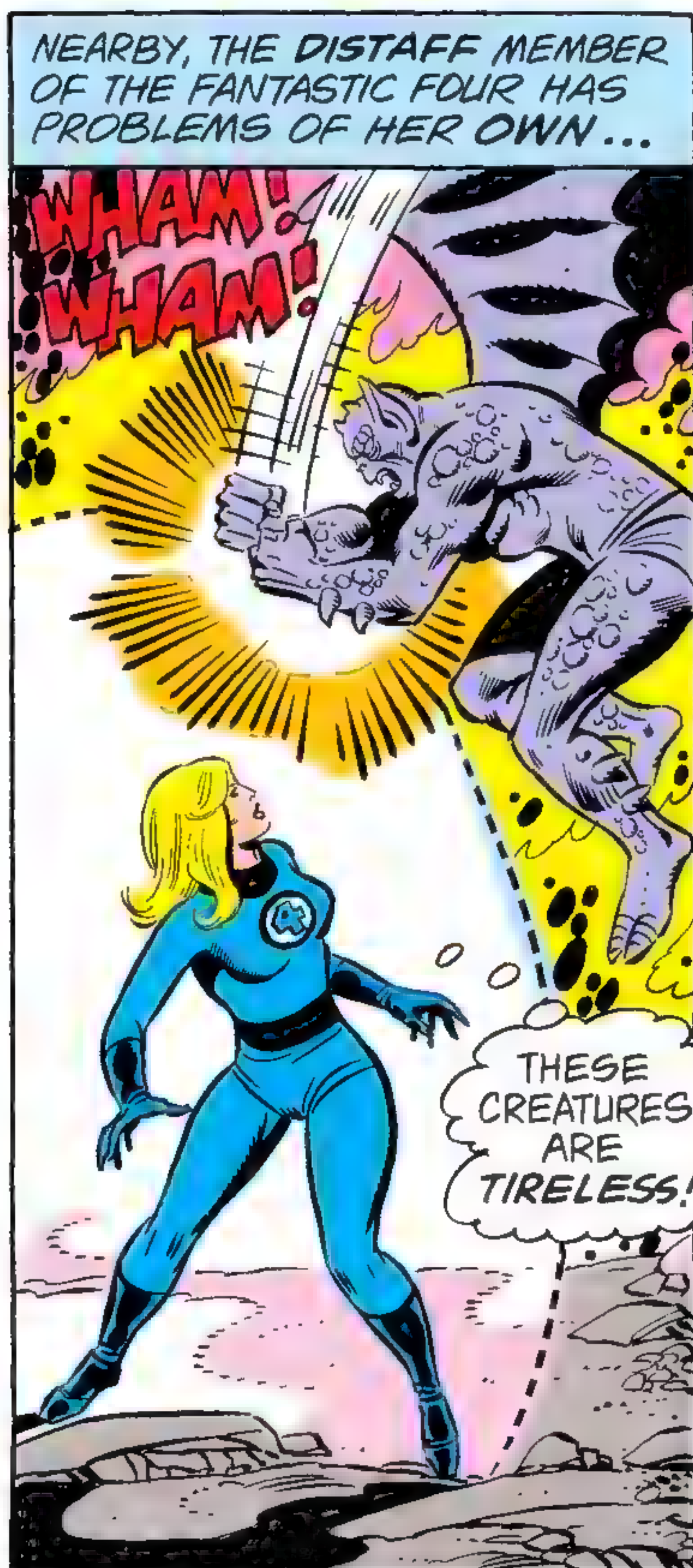
--LEAVING HIS ROUGH-HEWN PURSUER MOMENTARILY CONFUSED, UNCERTAIN OF WHAT NEXT TO DO...



...AND THUS, ALL IT DOES NOW IS...

...PERISH!

PEEKABOO, BUSTER!



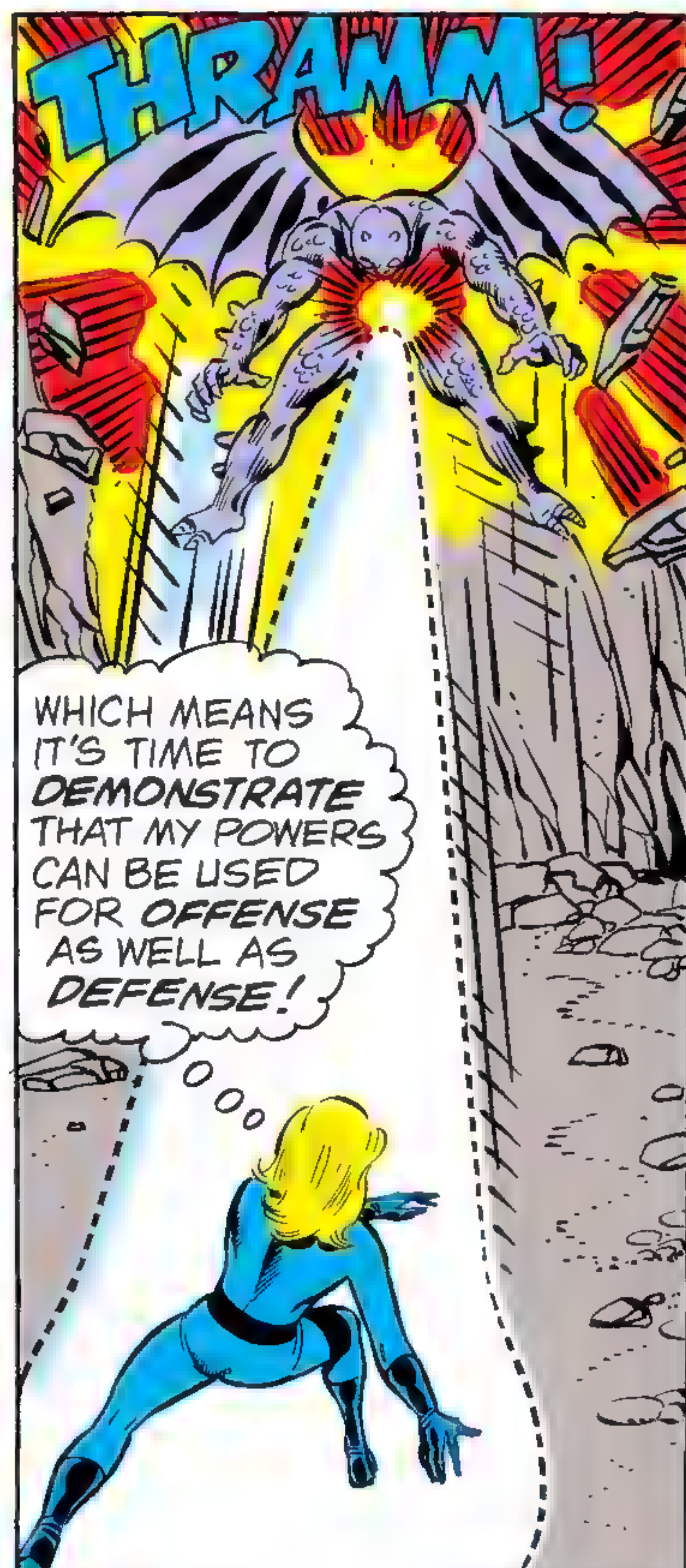
NEARBY, THE DISTAFF MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAS PROBLEMS OF HER OWN...

THESE CREATURES ARE TIRELESS!

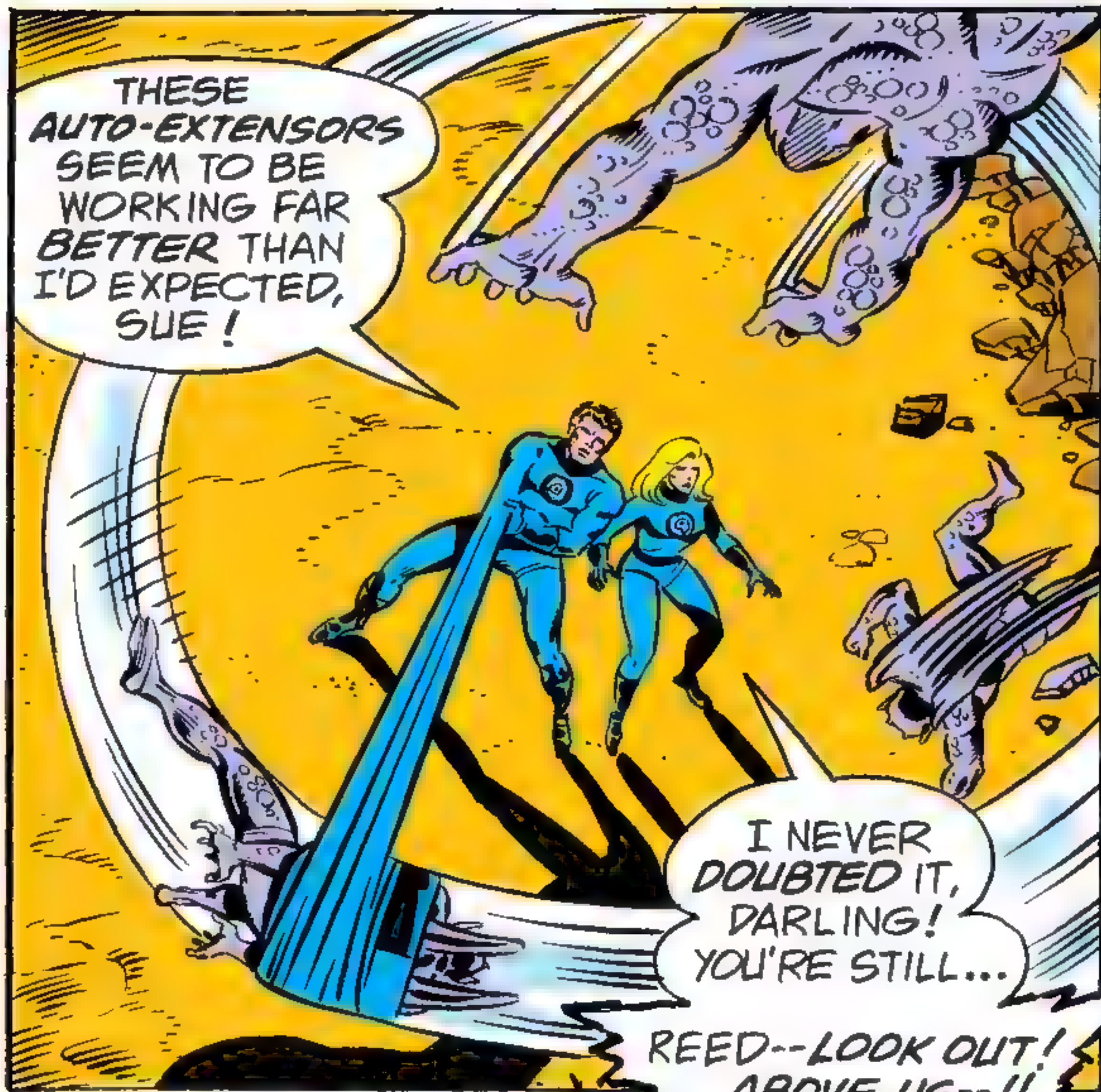


THIS ONE WILL KEEP POUNDING ON MY INVISIBLE FORCE SHIELD UNTIL HE BURSTS THRU--

--AND I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN!



WHICH MEANS IT'S TIME TO DEMONSTRATE THAT MY POWERS CAN BE USED FOR OFFENSE AS WELL AS DEFENSE!



THESE
AUTO-EXTENSORS
SEEM TO BE
WORKING FAR
BETTER THAN
I'D EXPECTED,
SUE!

I NEVER
DOUBTED IT,
DARLING!
YOU'RE STILL...

REED--LOOK OUT!
ABOVE US--!!



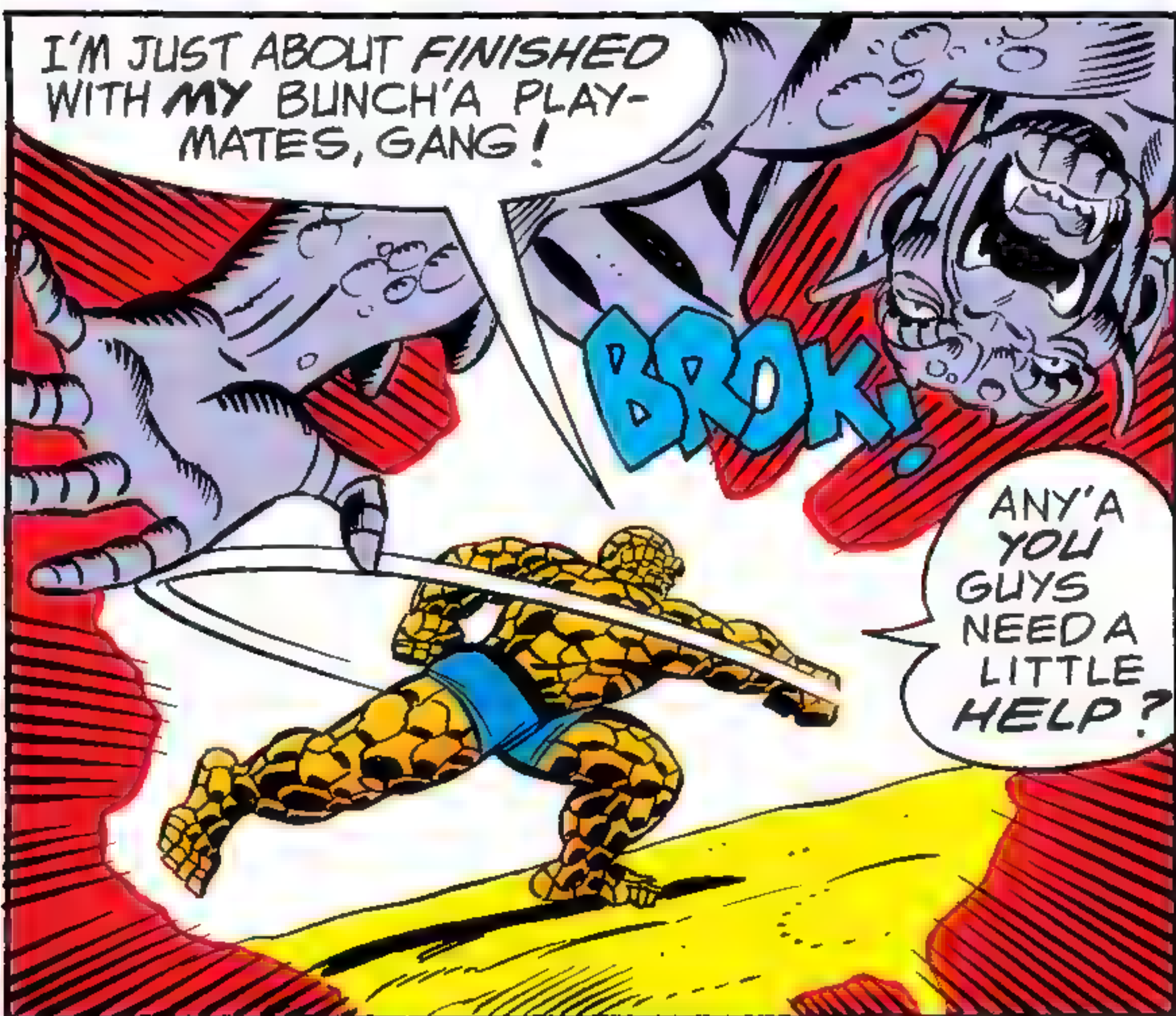
"I APPRECIATE THE
TIMELY WARNING,
SWEETHEART-- BUT
I'D ALREADY SEEN
HIM!"

SKRAKT!

"THAT'S WHY
I WAS
PLANNING
TO DO...
THIS!!"

SILENTLY, THE PEOPLE
OF NEW SALEM
STAND WITNESS TO
THE BIZARRE BATTLE,
THEIR FACES, EXPRES-
SIONLESS MASKS...

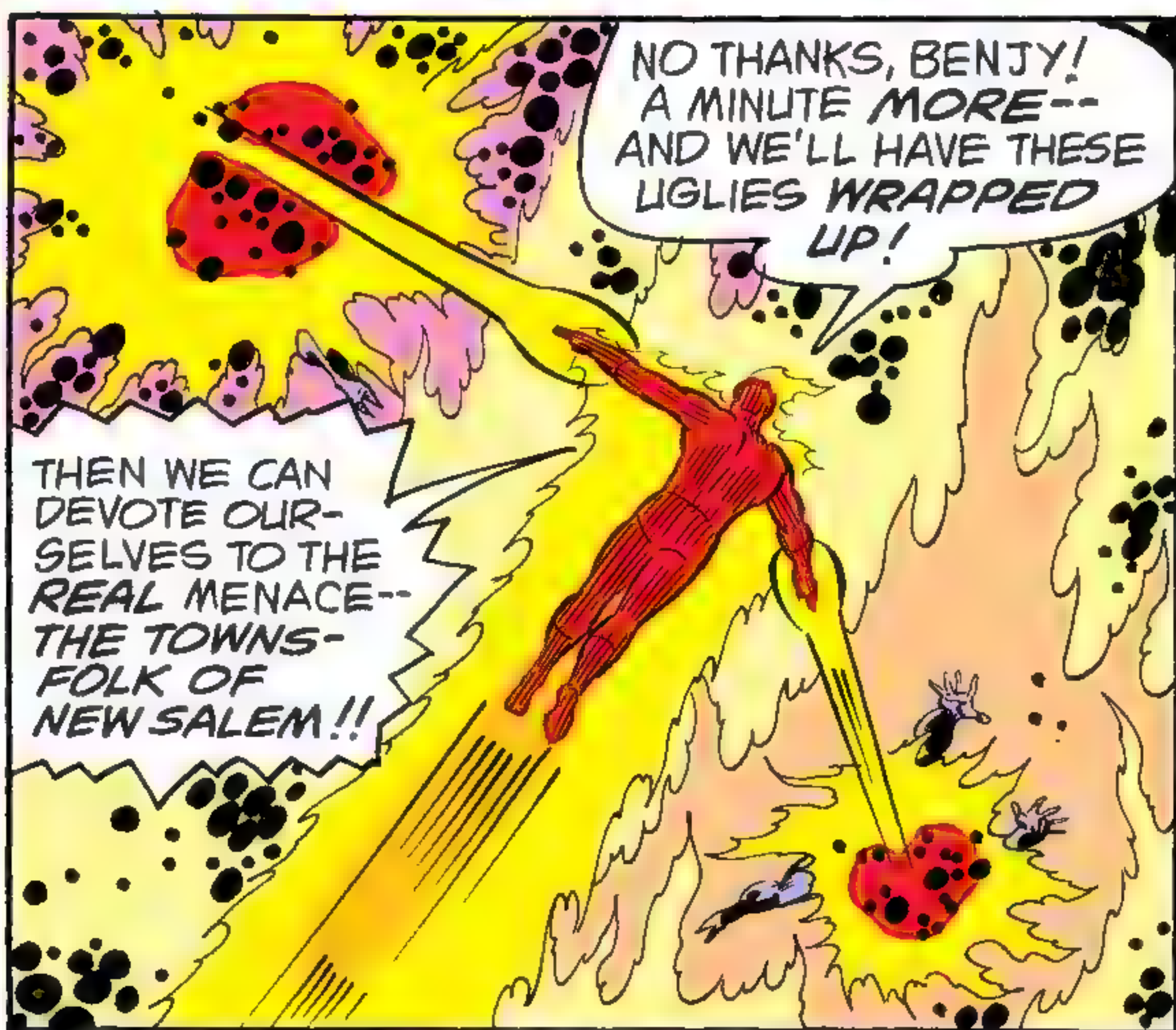
...SAVE FOR
A SUBTLE
SMOLDERING
ABOUT THE
EYES!



I'M JUST ABOUT FINISHED
WITH MY BUNCH'A PLAY-
MATES, GANG!

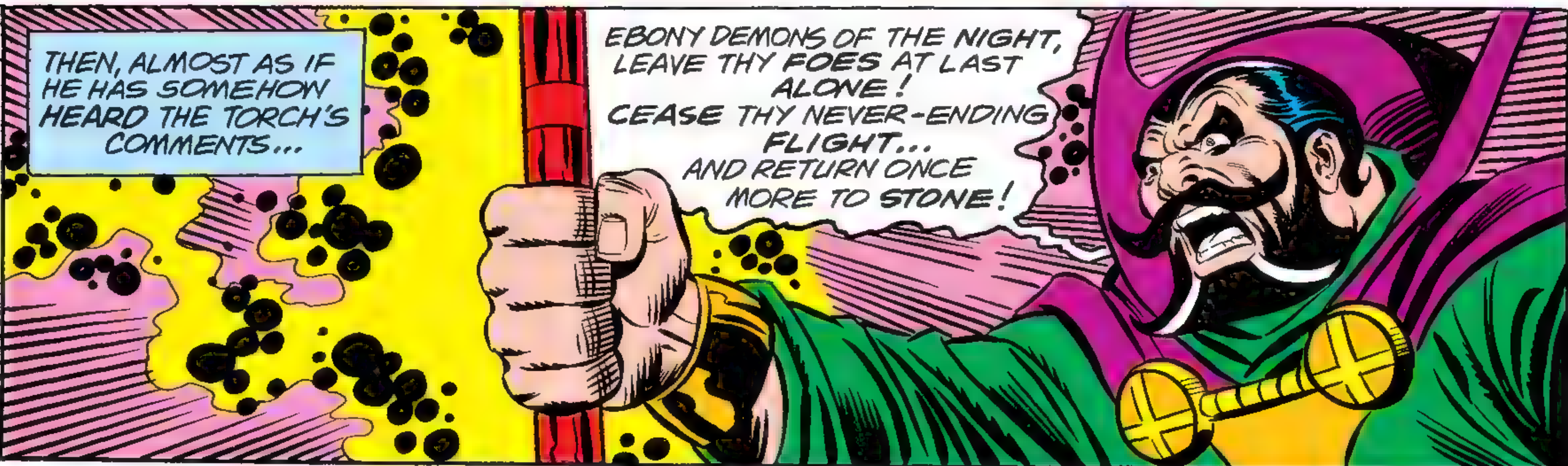
BROK!

ANY'A
YOU
GUYS
NEED A
LITTLE
HELP?



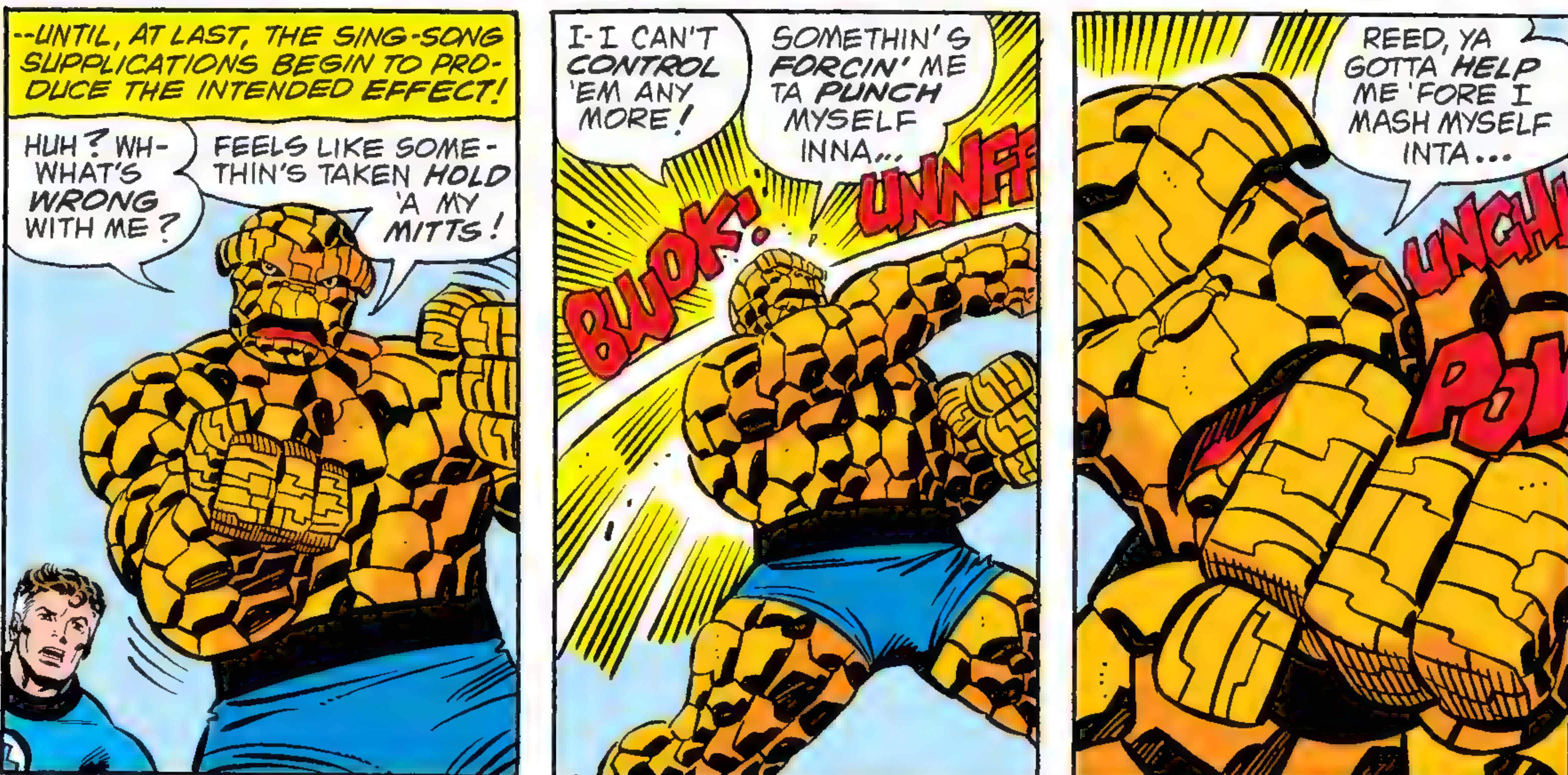
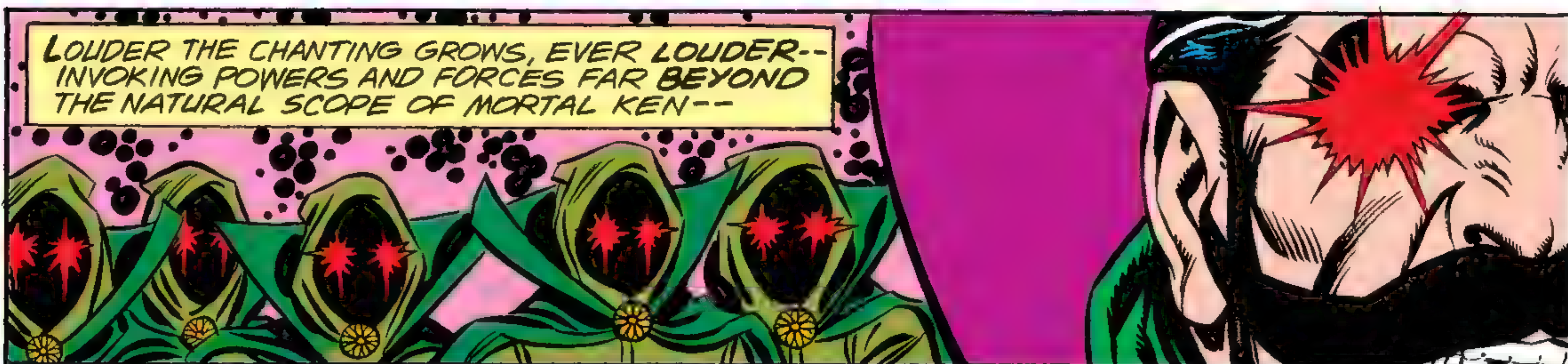
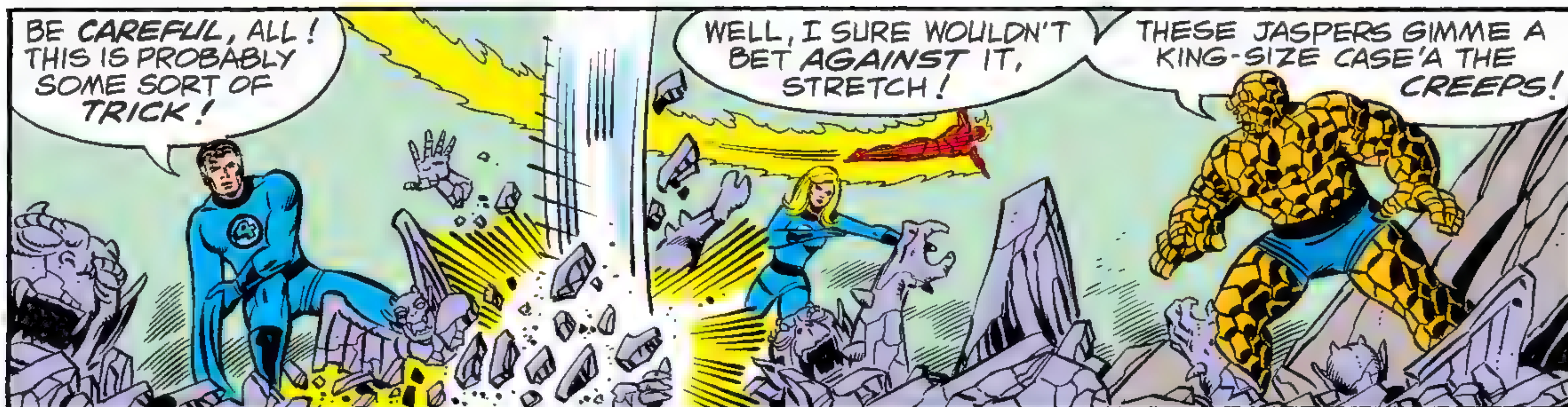
NO THANKS, BENJY!
A MINUTE MORE--
AND WE'LL HAVE THESE
UGLIES WRAPPED
UP!

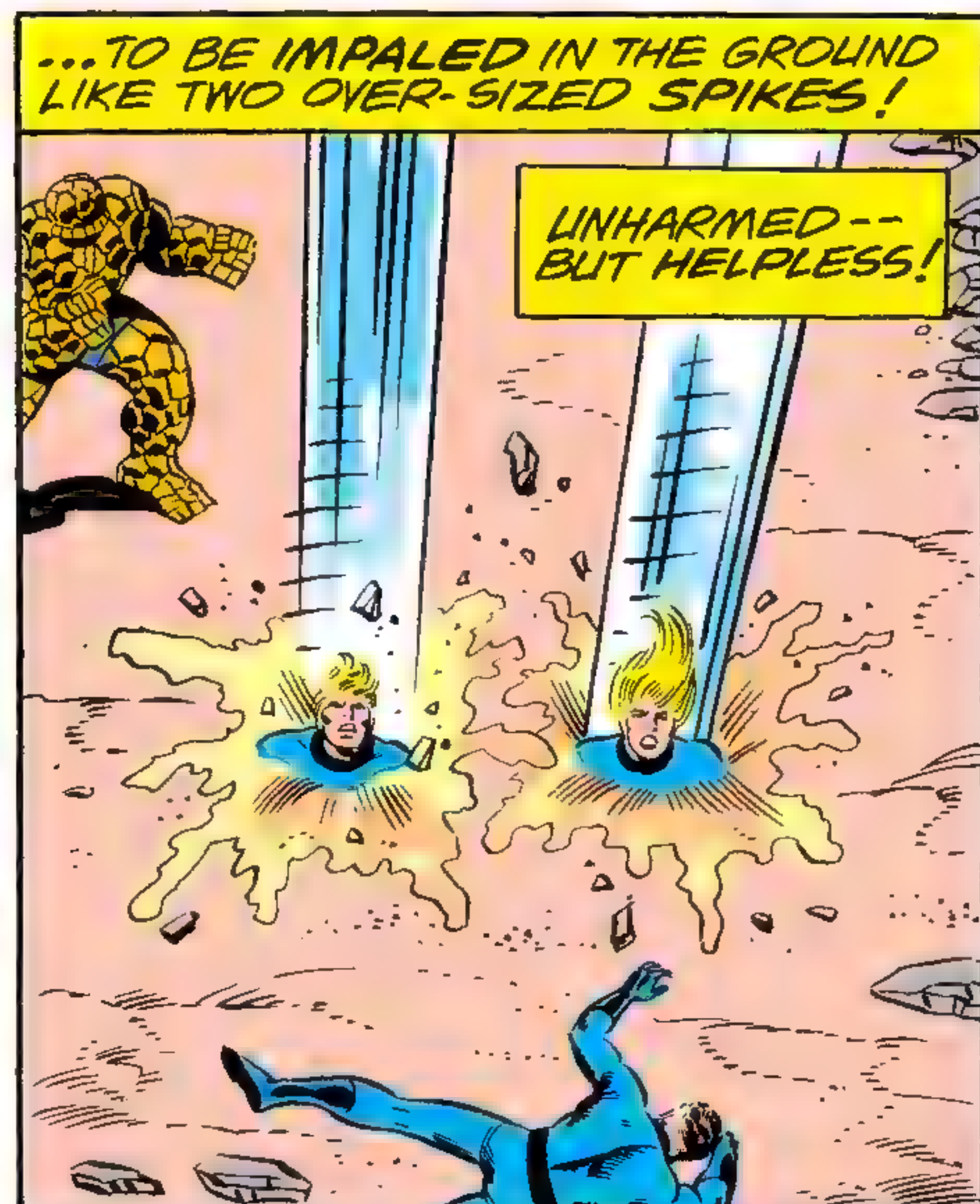
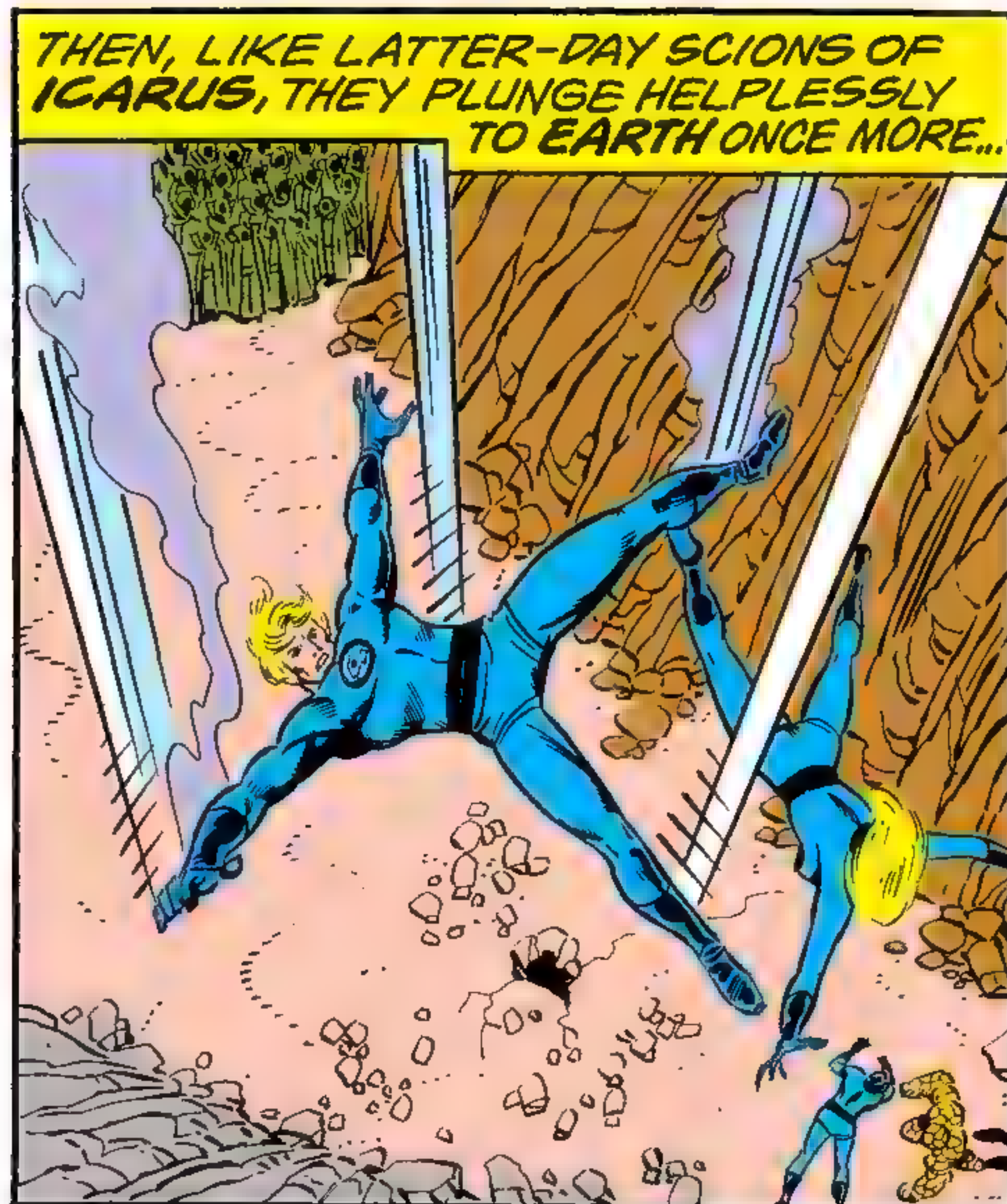
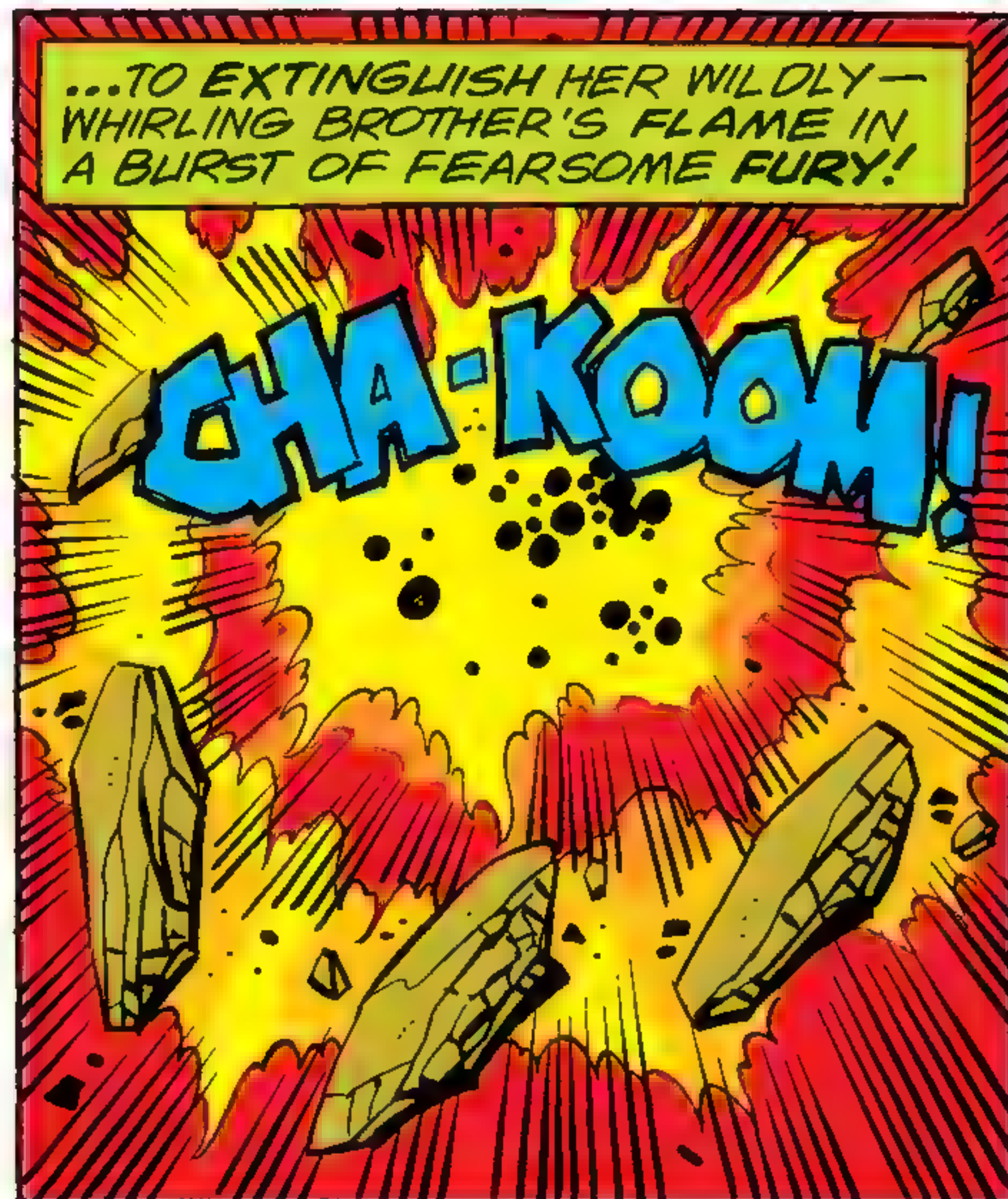
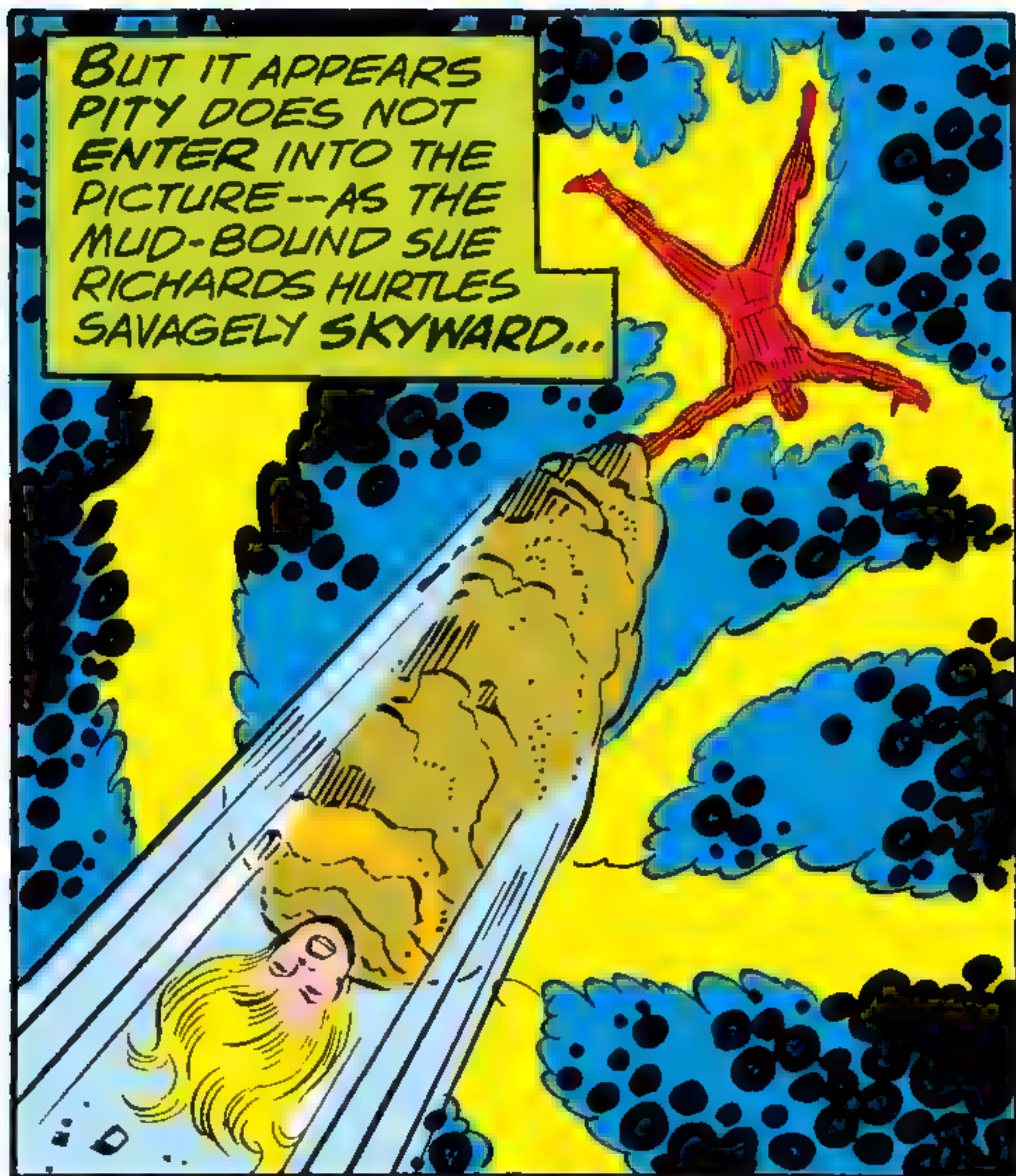
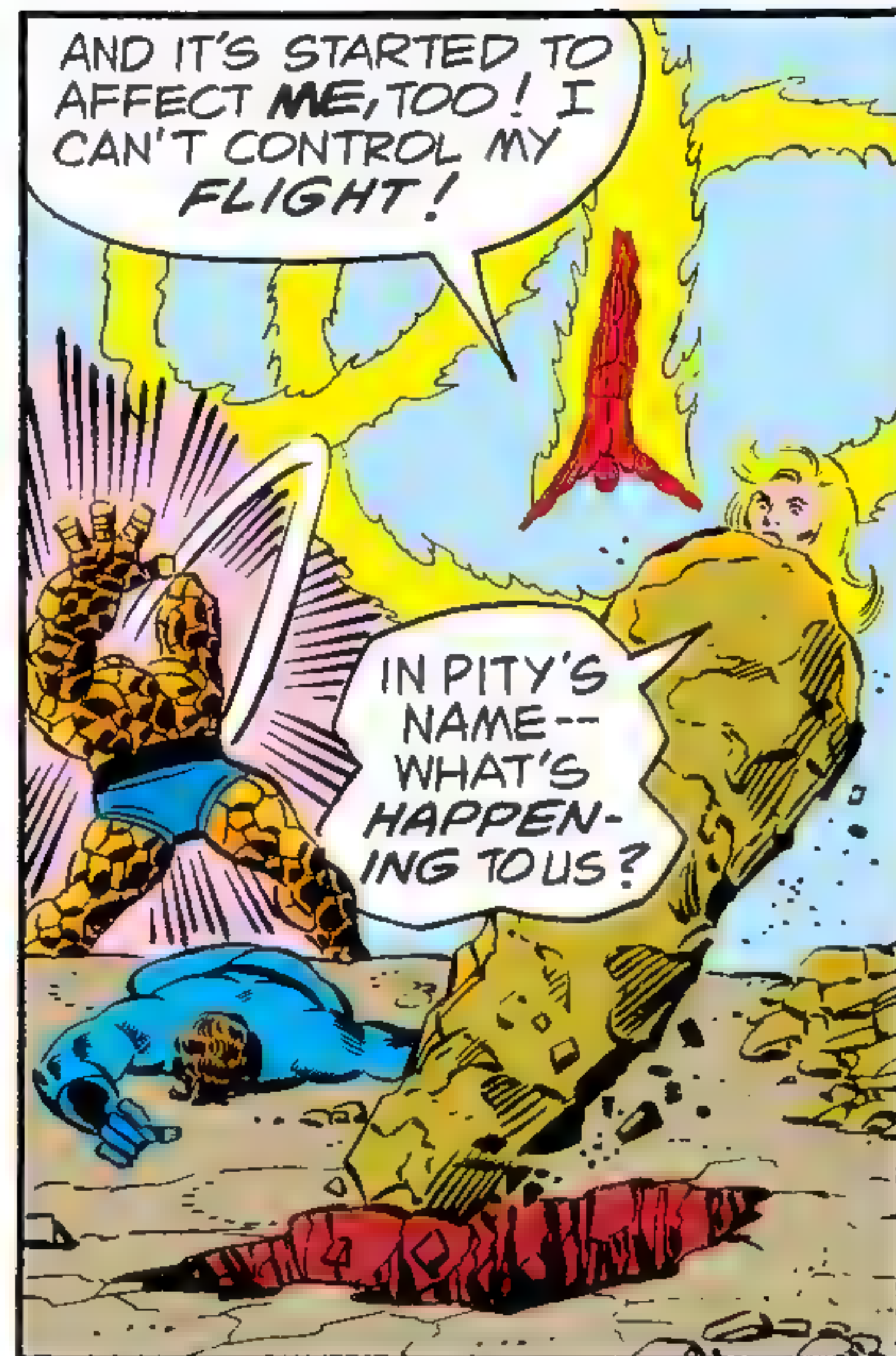
THEN WE CAN
DEVOTE OUR-
SELVES TO THE
REAL MENACE--
THE TOWNS-
FOLK OF
NEW SALEM!!



THEN, ALMOST AS IF
HE HAS SOMEHOW
HEARD THE TORCH'S
COMMENTS...

EBONY DEMONS OF THE NIGHT,
LEAVE THY FOES AT LAST
ALONE!
CEASE THY NEVER-ENDING
FLIGHT...
AND RETURN ONCE
MORE TO STONE!





L-LOOKS LIKE...I'M THE...*ONLY* ONE...L-LEFT *STANDIN'*...DON'T IT?

B-BUT ONE OF US... IS ALL...THAT'S REALLY...*NEEDED!*

YOU BOZDS... ARE *POWERFUL* AL'RIGHT... I'LL GIVE YA...*THAT* MUCH...

...BUT THERE STILL...AIN'T *NUTHIN'*... GONNA STOP ME...FROM TAKIN' THIS...TOWN APART...

...*STARTIN'* WITH YOU!!

YOUR *STAMINA* IS TRULY *AMAZING*, BENJAMIN GRIMM! ANY-ONE *ELSE* WOULD HAVE FALLEN LONG AGO!

BUT NOT ALL THE *STAMINA* IN THE WORLD CAN SAVE YOU FROM *THIS*, FOOL--

--THE *FURY* OF THE *ARCANE ARTS!*

UUNNGGHH!!

AFTER ALL, WHAT CHANCE COULD ANY *MORTAL* BEING STAND AGAINST A CITY RULED BY...

...*WITCHES!*

YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS WERE ALL *FOOLS*, THING--

--FOR THINKING YOU COULD EVER HOPE TO DEFY OUR *POWER!*

NEXT ISSUE: THE **KILLERS** CALLED... **SALEM'S SEVEN!**
YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE 'EM TO BELIEVE 'EM!

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



30¢
©

186
SEPT
02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]

ENTER:
SALEM'S
SEVEN!



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE **FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

LEN WEIN
WRITER/EDITOR

GEORGE PÉREZ & JOE SINNOTT
ARTISTS/ILLUSTRATORS

GLYNIS WEIN
colorist

JOHN COSTANZA
letterer

ENTER: SALEM'S SEVEN!

UNCONSCIOUS IS NOT THE BEST
OF ALL POSSIBLE WAYS TO SPEND
AN EVENING!

IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE US,
JUST ASK THE FF-- WHO'VE
SPENT THE PAST SEVERAL HOURS
IN THAT CONDITION, AFTER A MOST
UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER WITH
THE BIZARRE POPULACE OF NEW
SALEM, COLORADO!

EVEN AS WE SPEAK, OUR
STALWART HEROES ARE
AWAKENING-- AND NEED-
LESS TO SAY, THEY'RE NOT
HAPPY!

ARE MOMMY
AND DADDY
OKAY, AUNTIE
AGATHA?

AS WELL AS
CAN BE
EXPECTED,
LITTLE ONE.

HEY, SPEAK
FER YERSELF,
SISTER!
PERSONALLY,
I FEEL LIKE
WARMED-OVER
CHOPPED
LIVER!



WHATEVER WE'VE GONE THRU, BEN--IT WAS **WORTH IT!** WE'VE **FOUND** LITTLE **FRANKLIN!**

HERE, DARLING--COME TO **MOMMY!**

AUNTIE AGATHA TOOK GOOD **CARE** OF ME, MOMMY.

I DID WHAT I **COULD**, MRS. RICHARDS.

PLEASE TRY TO **FORGIVE** ME FOR **INVOLVING** YOU IN THIS.

EXACTLY WHAT **IS** THIS, MISS HARKNESS? **WHY** DID YOU STEAL AWAY OUR **SON?**

I THOUGHT PERHAPS HIS SPECIAL **POWERS** COULD **PROTECT** ME FROM THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO **RE-TURN** ME HERE AGAINST MY **WILL!**

BUT I HAD BEEN **APART** FROM YOU ALL FOR SO **LONG**, I DID NOT REALIZE THE CHILD NO LONGER **HAD** SUCH **POWERS!**

WHEN THOSE I **HID** FROM AT LAST **FOUND** ME, THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO TO PREVENT OUR **ABDUCTION!**

I... SEE.

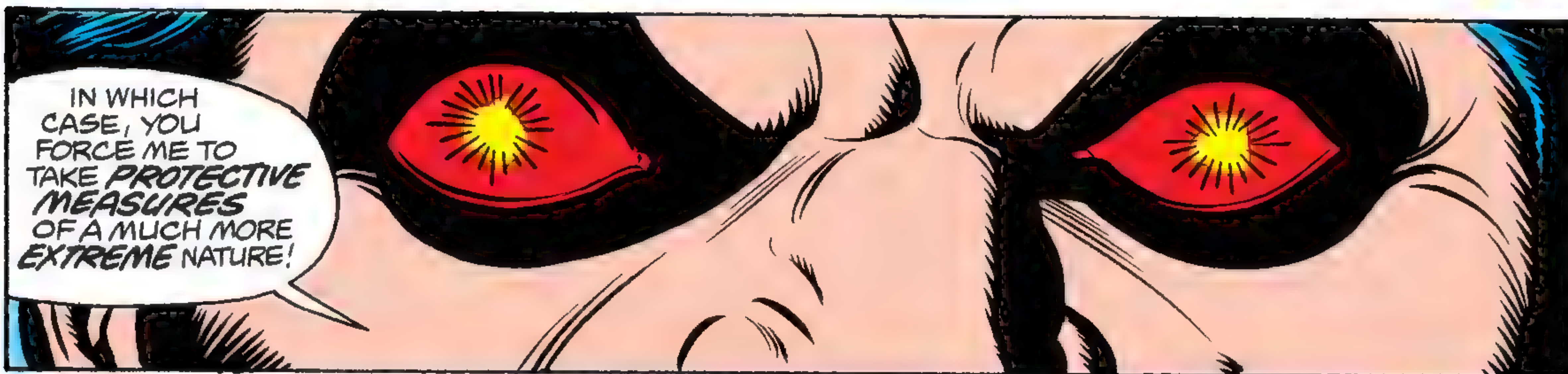
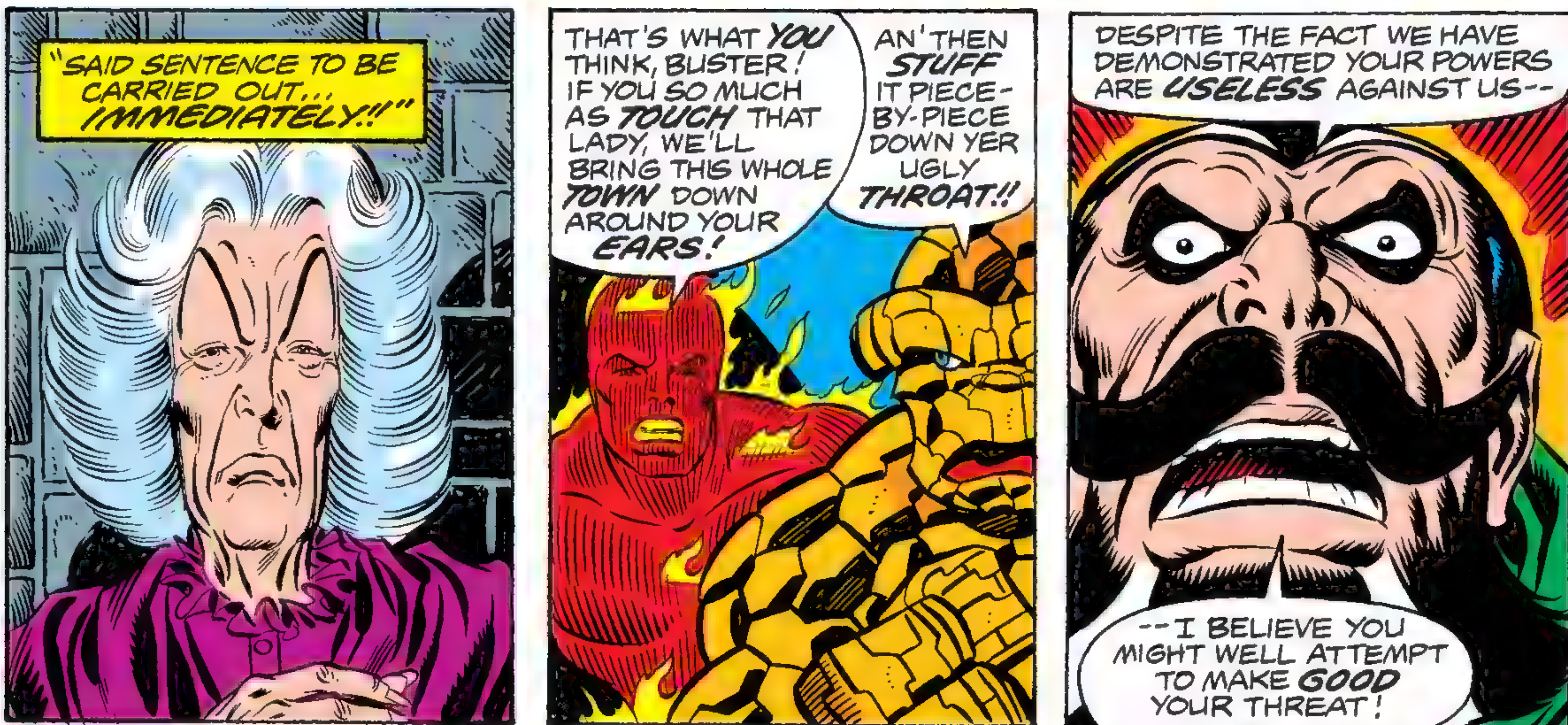
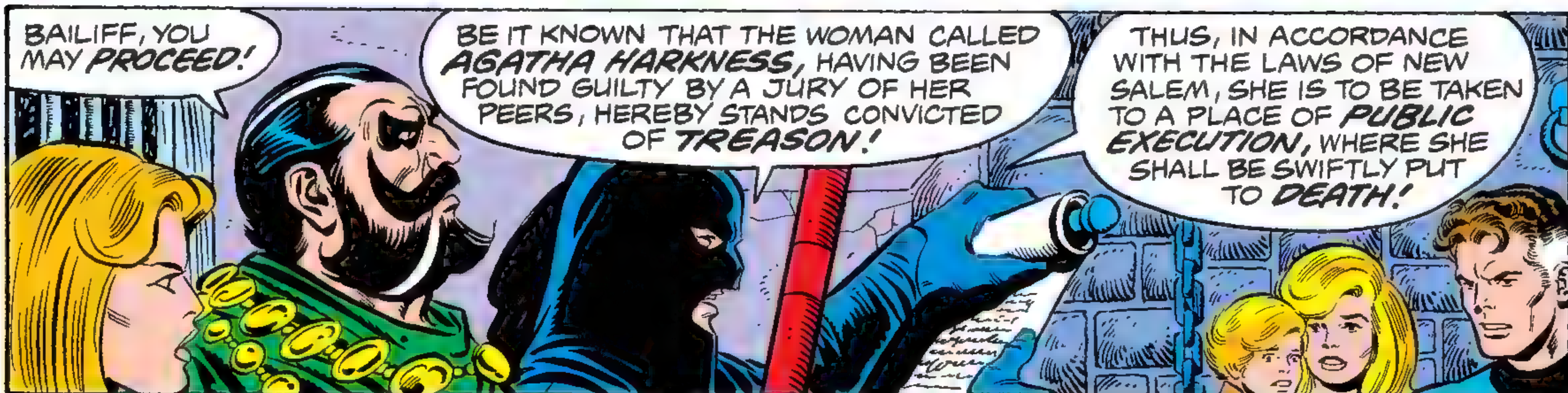
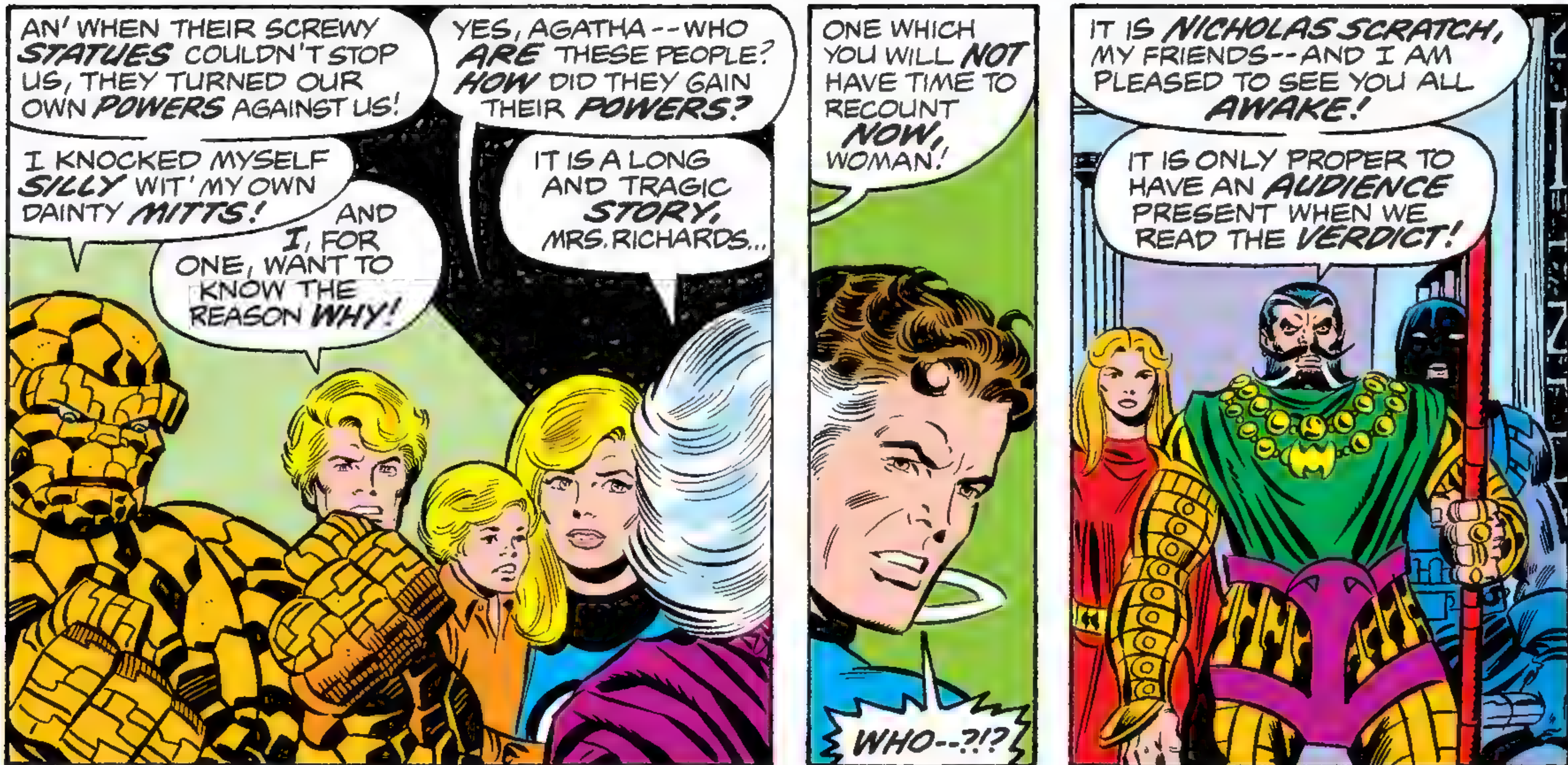
THEN THAT HELPS TO EXPLAIN THE INHUMAN **ELIMINATOR** YOUR CAPTORS LEFT BEHIND TO **DESTROY** WHISPER HILL--AND ANY **EVIDENCE** OF YOUR EVER HAVING **LIVED** THERE!

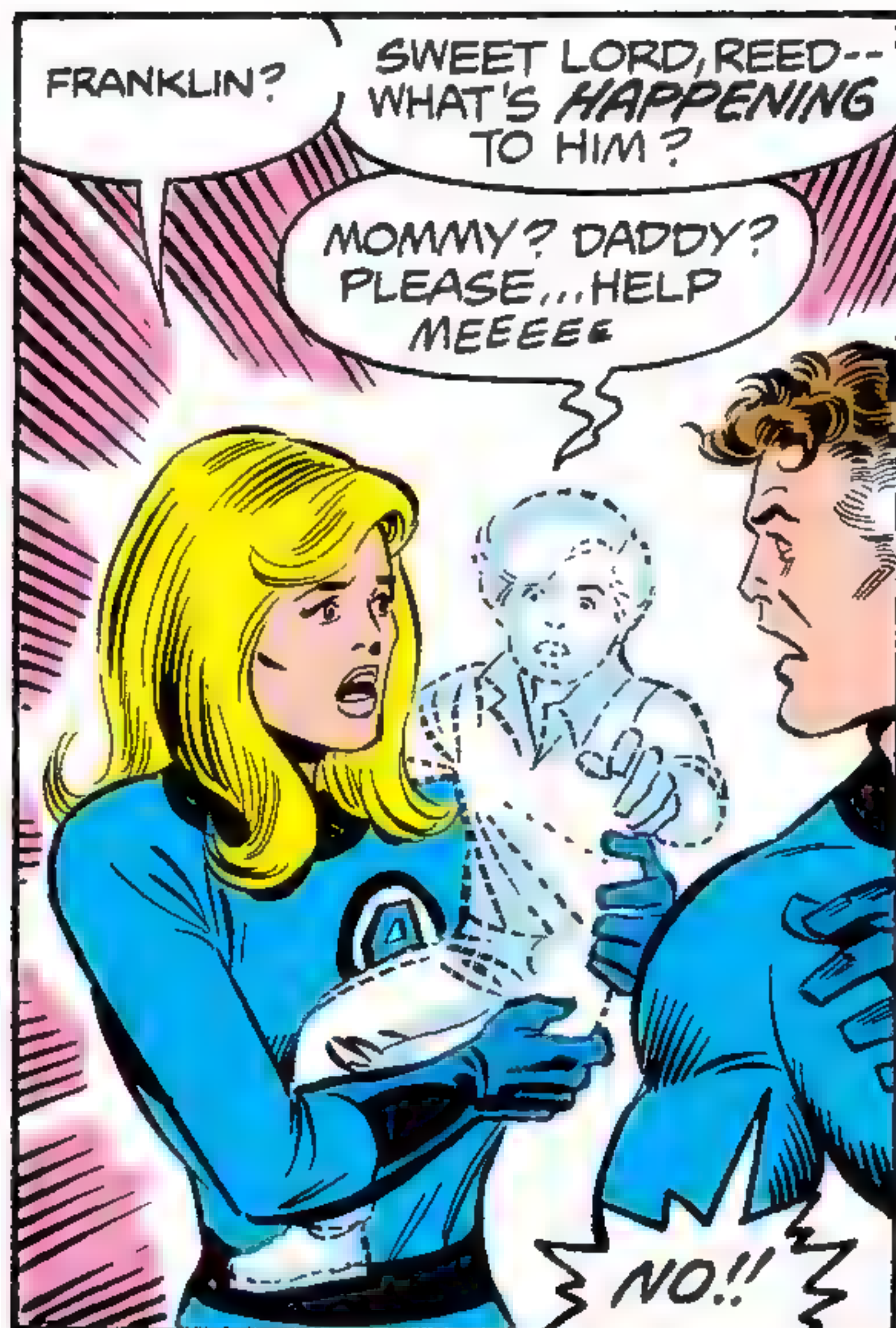
YEAH... INCLUDIN' **US!**

"WE TRACED THE ELIMINATOR'S POINT OF ORIGIN BACK HERE TO **NEW SALEM**--WHERE WE SOON FOUND OURSELVES BATTLING AN ARMY OF MONSTROUS STONE **GARGOYLES**..."

"... GARGOYLES ANIMATED THRU SOME **SUPERNATURAL** MEANS BY A MAN NAMED **NICHOLAS SCRATCH**, AIDED AND ABETTED BY AN UNHOLY **SATAN-STAFF** AND THE CITIZENS OF THIS **CITY!**" *

* ALL OF WHICH IS A PRETTY FAIR **RECOUNTING** OF THE PULSE-POUNDING **EVENTS** OF THE PAST SEVERAL ISSUES. --LEN.



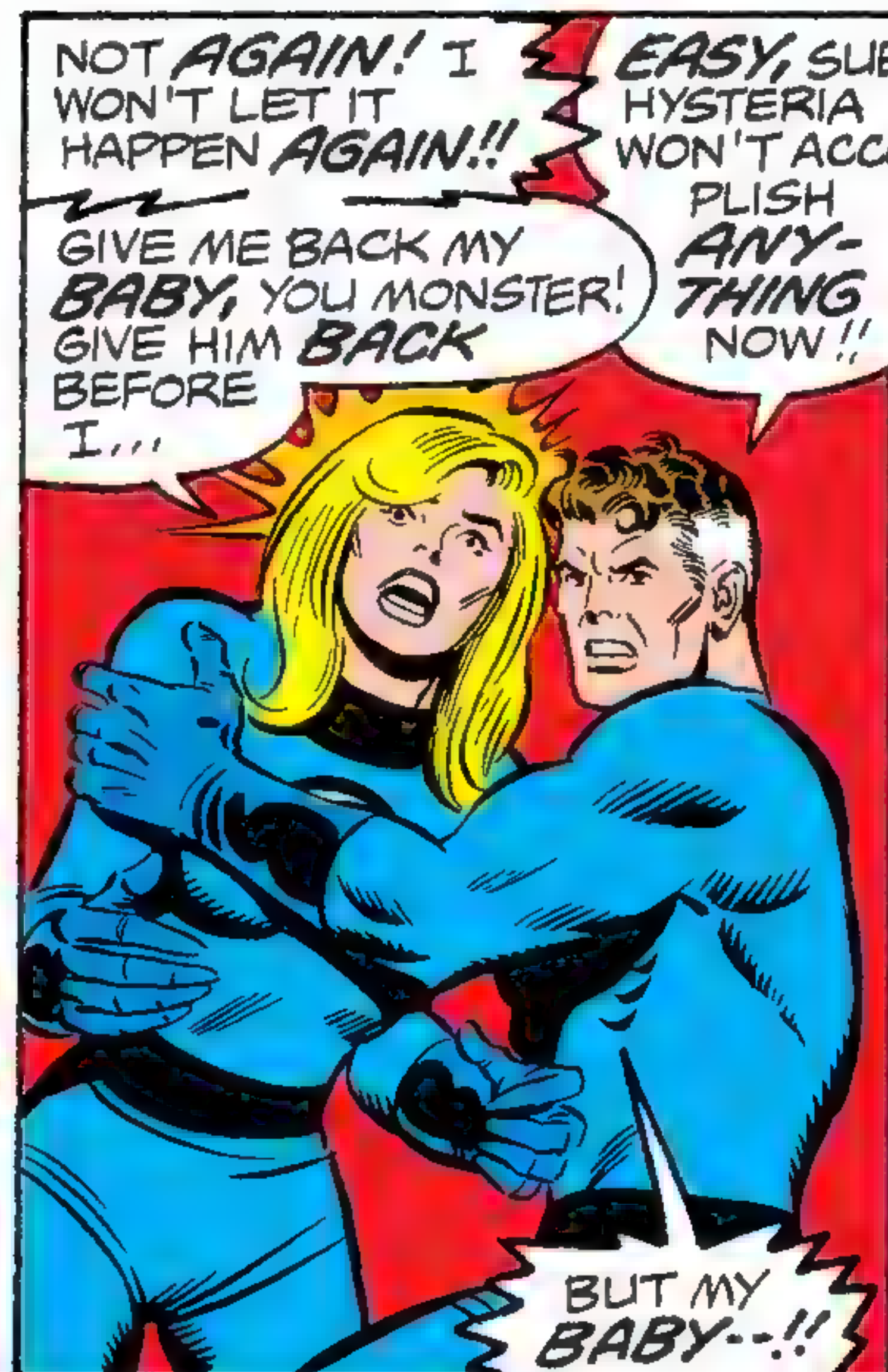


FRANKLIN?

SWEET LORD, REED--
WHAT'S **HAPPENING**
TO HIM?

MOMMY? DADDY?
PLEASE...HELP
MEEEEEE

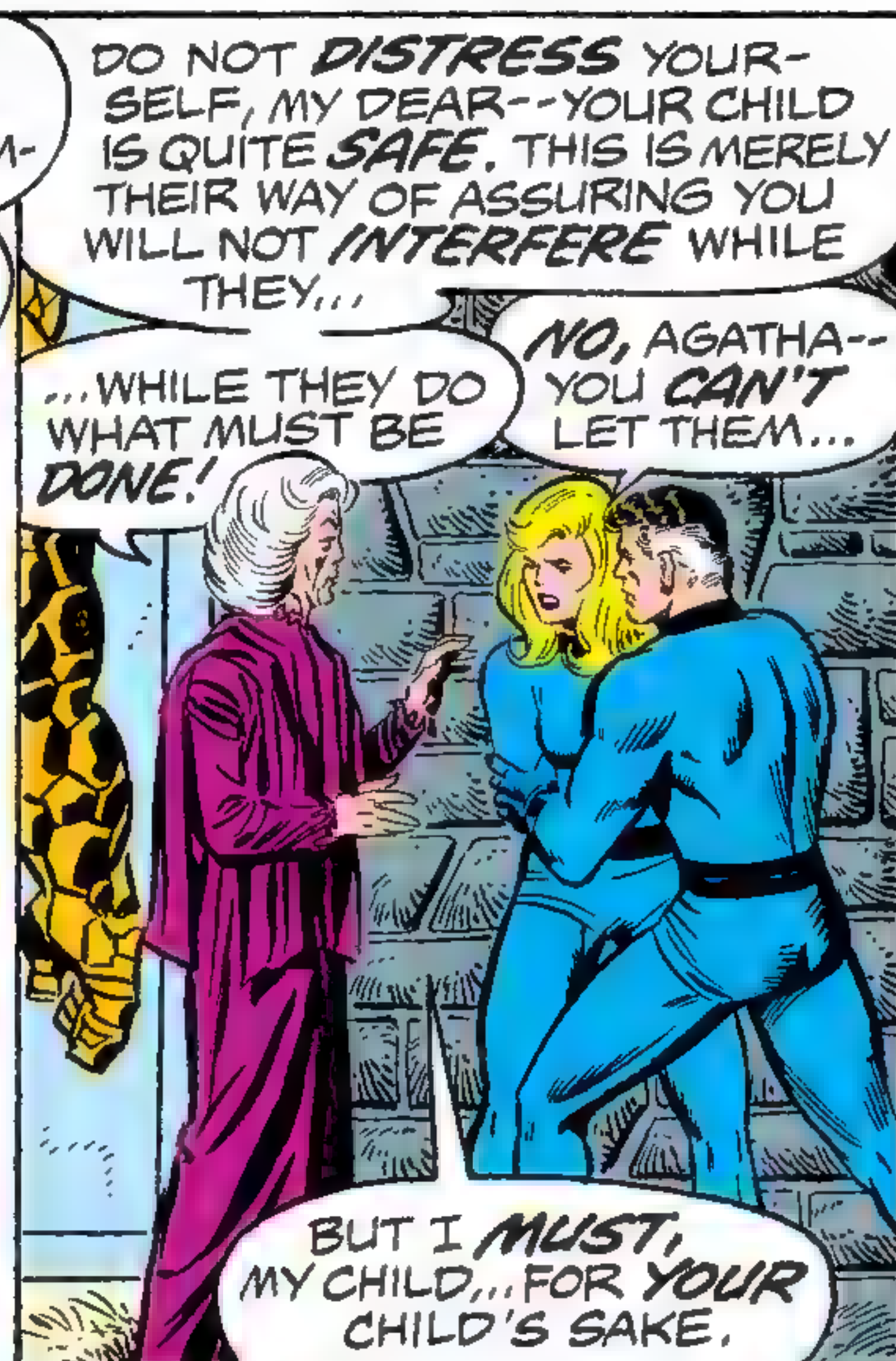
NO!!



NOT **AGAIN!** I
WON'T LET IT
HAPPEN **AGAIN!!**
GIVE ME BACK MY
BABY, YOU MONSTER!
GIVE HIM **BACK**
BEFORE
I...

EASY, SUE!
HYSTERIA
WON'T ACCOM-
PLISH
**ANY-
THING**
NOW!!

BUT MY
BABY--!!

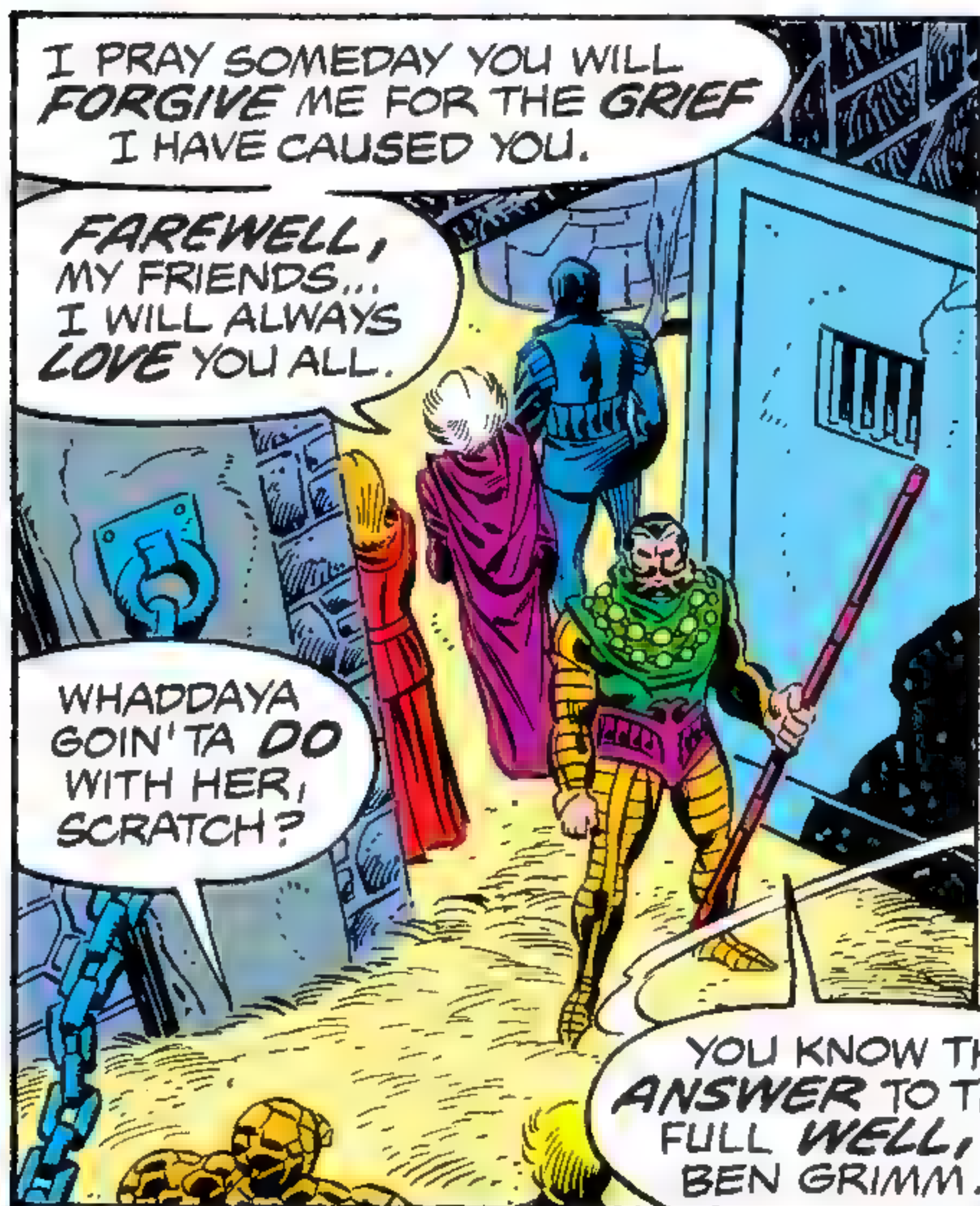


DO NOT **DISTRESS** YOUR-
SELF, MY DEAR--YOUR CHILD
IS QUITE **SAFE**. THIS IS MERELY
THEIR WAY OF ASSURING YOU
WILL NOT **INTERFERE** WHILE
THEY...

...WHILE THEY DO
WHAT MUST BE
DONE!

NO, AGATHA--
YOU **CAN'T**
LET THEM...

BUT I **MUST**,
MY CHILD...FOR YOUR
CHILD'S SAKE.



I PRAY SOMEDAY YOU WILL
FORGIVE ME FOR THE **GRIEF**
I HAVE CAUSED YOU.

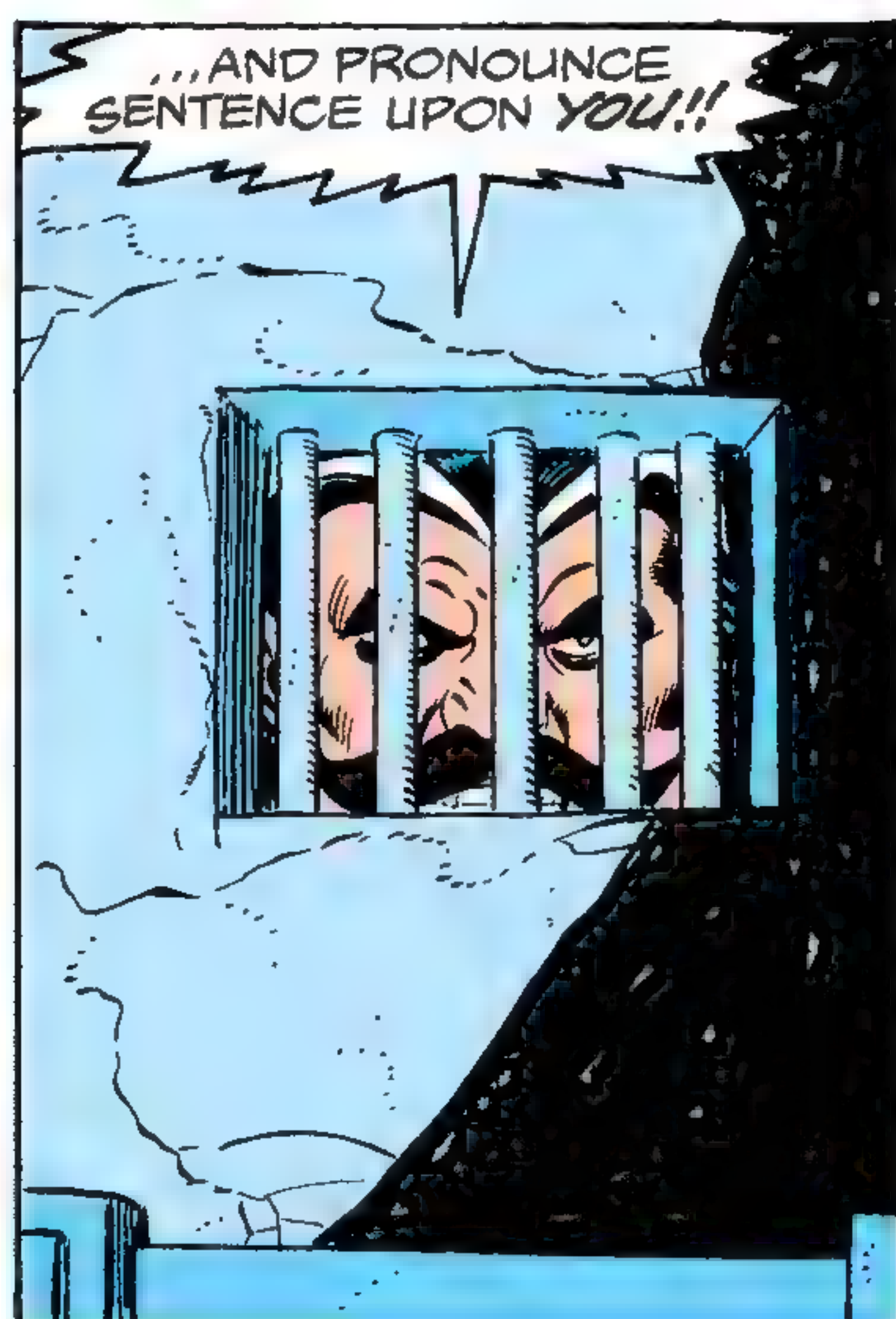
FAREWELL,
MY FRIENDS...
I WILL ALWAYS
LOVE YOU ALL.

WHADDAYA
GOIN'TA **DO**
WITH HER,
SCRATCH?

YOU KNOW THE
ANSWER TO THAT
FULL **WELL**,
BEN GRIMM.



AND WHEN THE CERE-
MONY IS FINALLY **OVER**
-- AND THE OLD WOMAN
IS **SLAIN**-- I INTEND
TO **RETURN** HERE...



...AND PRONOUNCE
SENTENCE UPON YOU!!



WH-WHAT
ARE WE
SUPPOSED
TO DO **NOW**,
REED?

SO LONG AS THEY
HOLD LITTLE
FRANKLIN,
SWEETHEART--
THERE'S NOT
MUCH WE **CAN** DO!

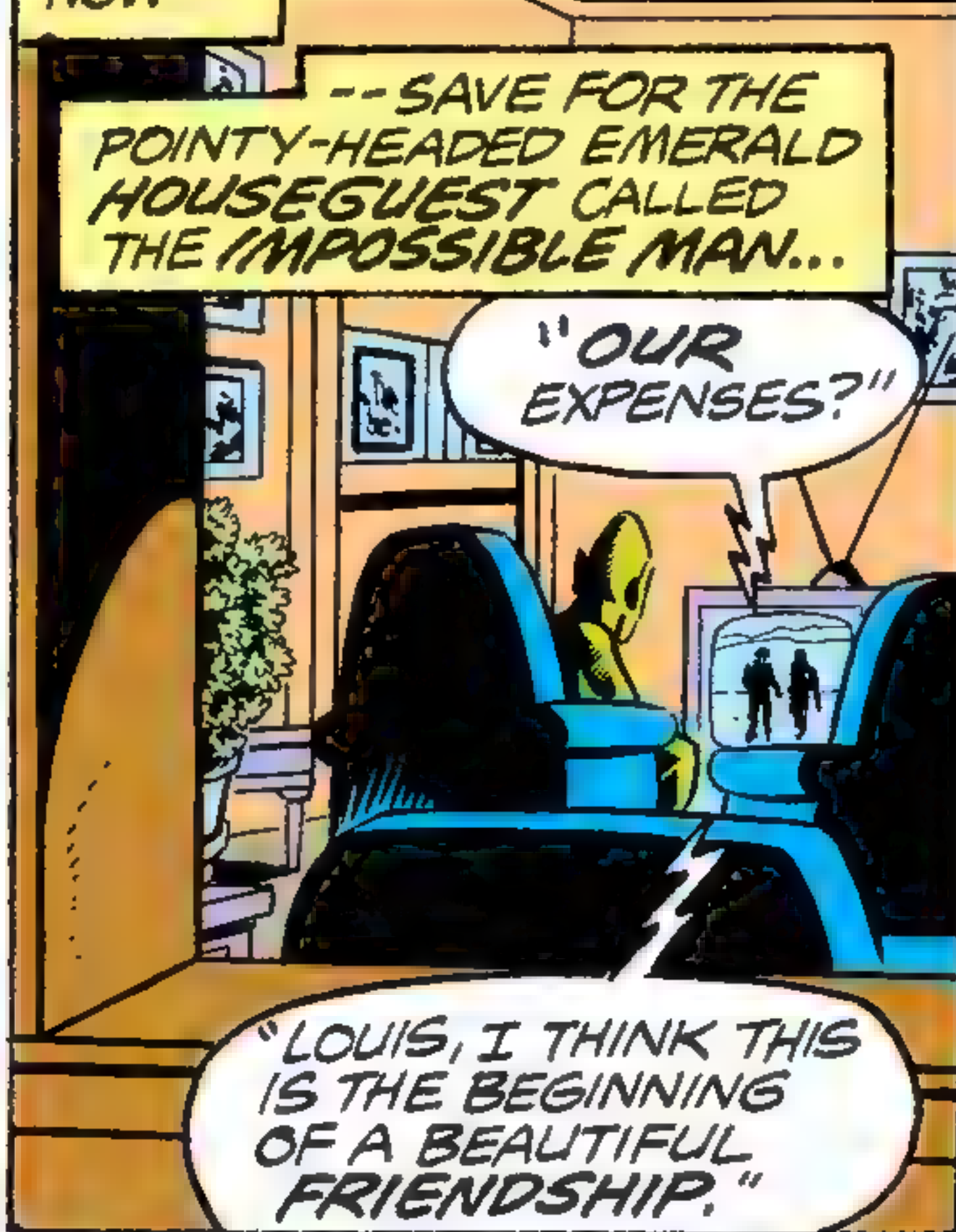
BUT IF WE JUST STAND
HERE AND DO **NOTHING**...
AGATHA HARKNESS
WILL **DIE!!**

WOTTA REVOLTIN'
DEVELOPMENT
THIS IS!!

SEVERAL THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM SINISTER NEW SALEM, IN THE HEART OF DARKEST MANHATTAN, STANDS THE FAR-FAMED BAXTER BUILDING, HOME OF THE CAPTIVE FANTASTIC FOUR.



THOUGH USUALLY THE SCENE OF CONSIDERABLE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE, ITS UPPERMOST FLOORS ARE ALL BUT DESERTED RIGHT NOW--



-- SAVE FOR THE POINTY-HEADED EMERALD HOUSEGUEST CALLED THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN...

"OUR EXPENSES?"

"LOUIS, I THINK THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP."

...AND SOMEONE ELSE!!

I JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THAT COLORFUL HUMAN WITH THE LISP.

I WONDER HOW FAMOUS HE MIGHT HAVE BECOME IF HE COULD ONLY HAVE SPOKEN CLEARLY?



THAT'S A QUESTION YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO ANSWER, FOOL!



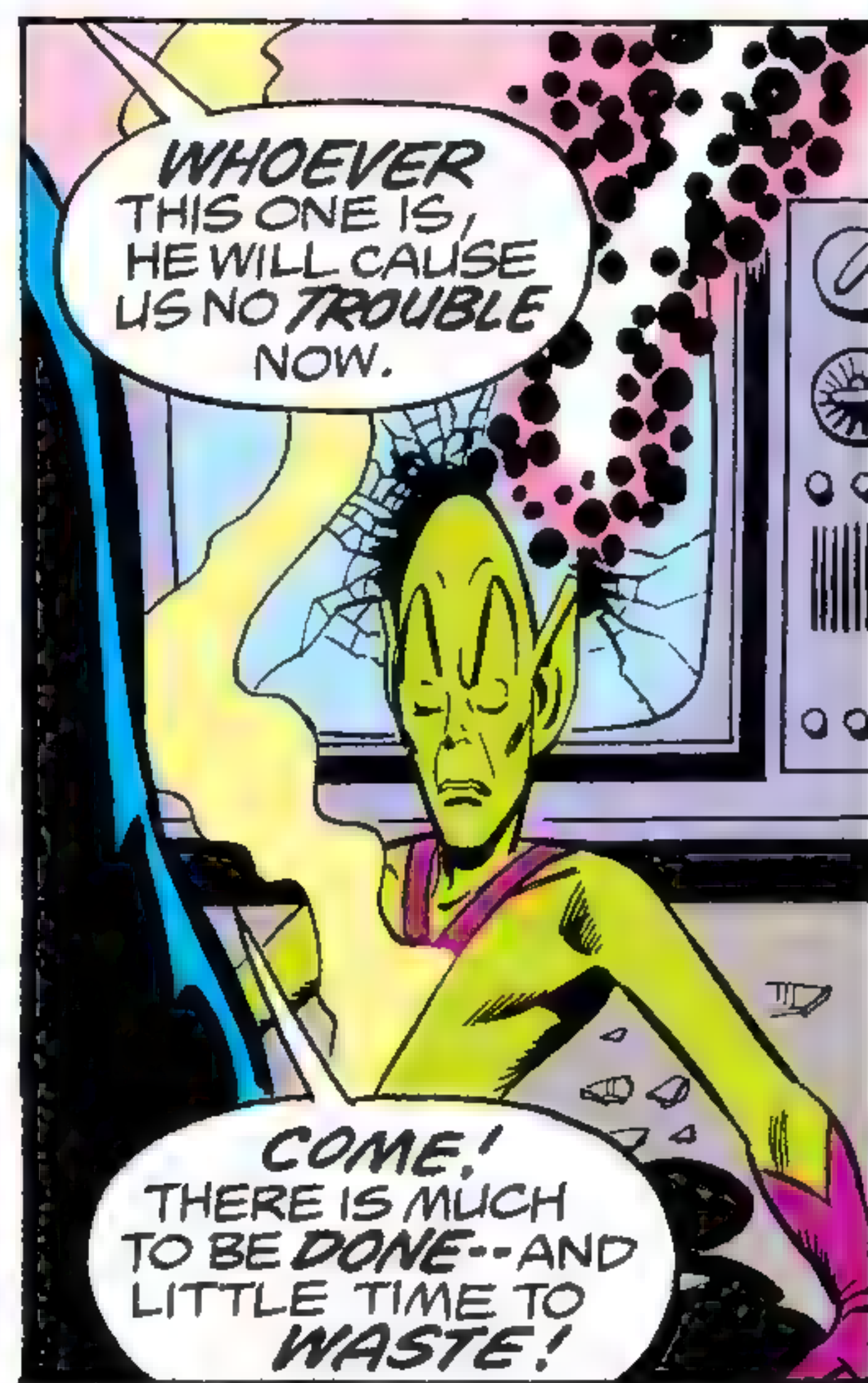
WHO...?!

AARRGGHHH

SHRAKKT!



WHOEVER THIS ONE IS, HE WILL CAUSE US NO TROUBLE NOW.

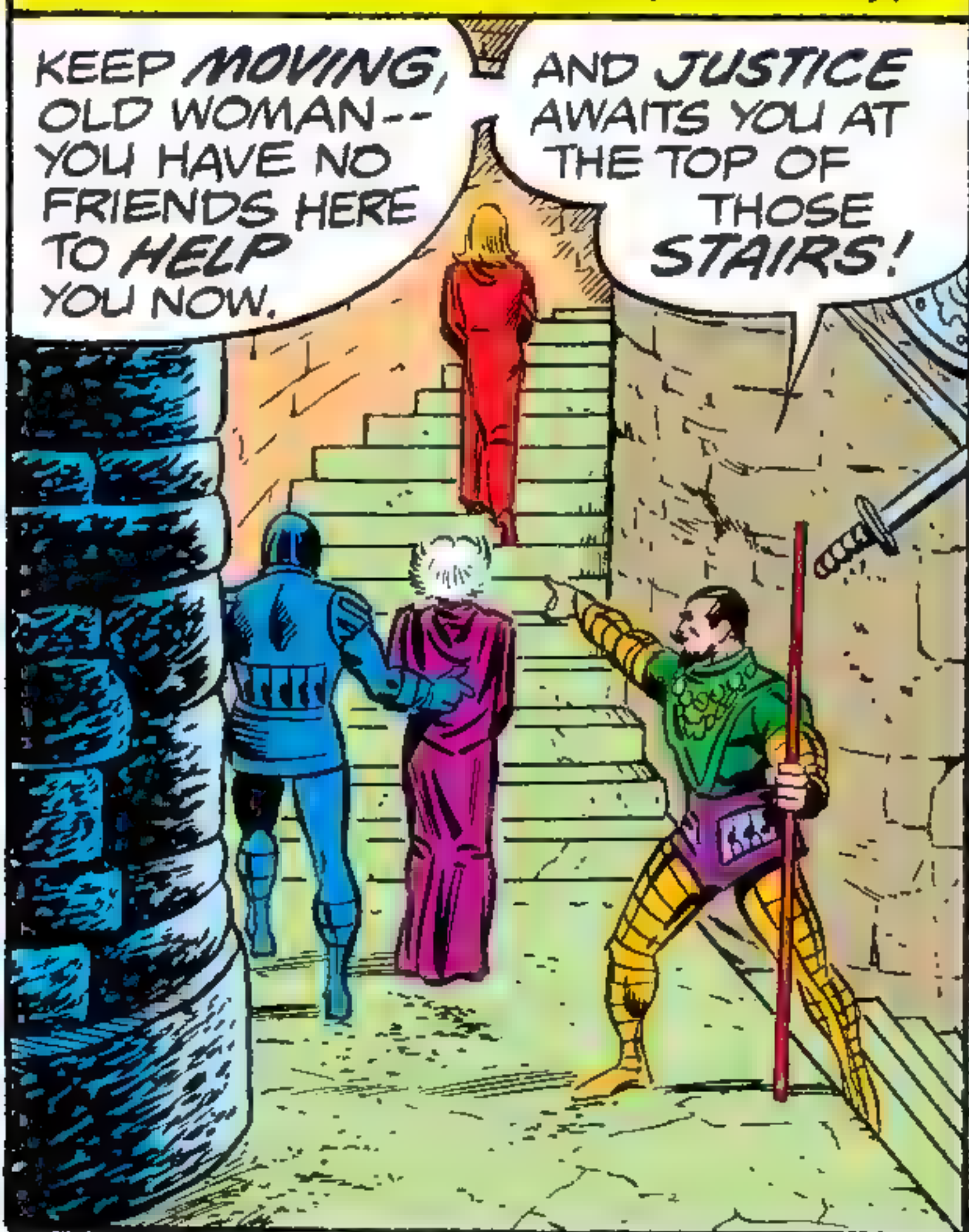


COME! THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE--AND LITTLE TIME TO WASTE!

AND, ON THAT MYSTERIOUS NOTE, WE RETURN YOU TO NEW SALEM...

KEEP MOVING, OLD WOMAN-- YOU HAVE NO FRIENDS HERE TO HELP YOU NOW.

AND JUSTICE AWAITS YOU AT THE TOP OF THOSE STAIRS!



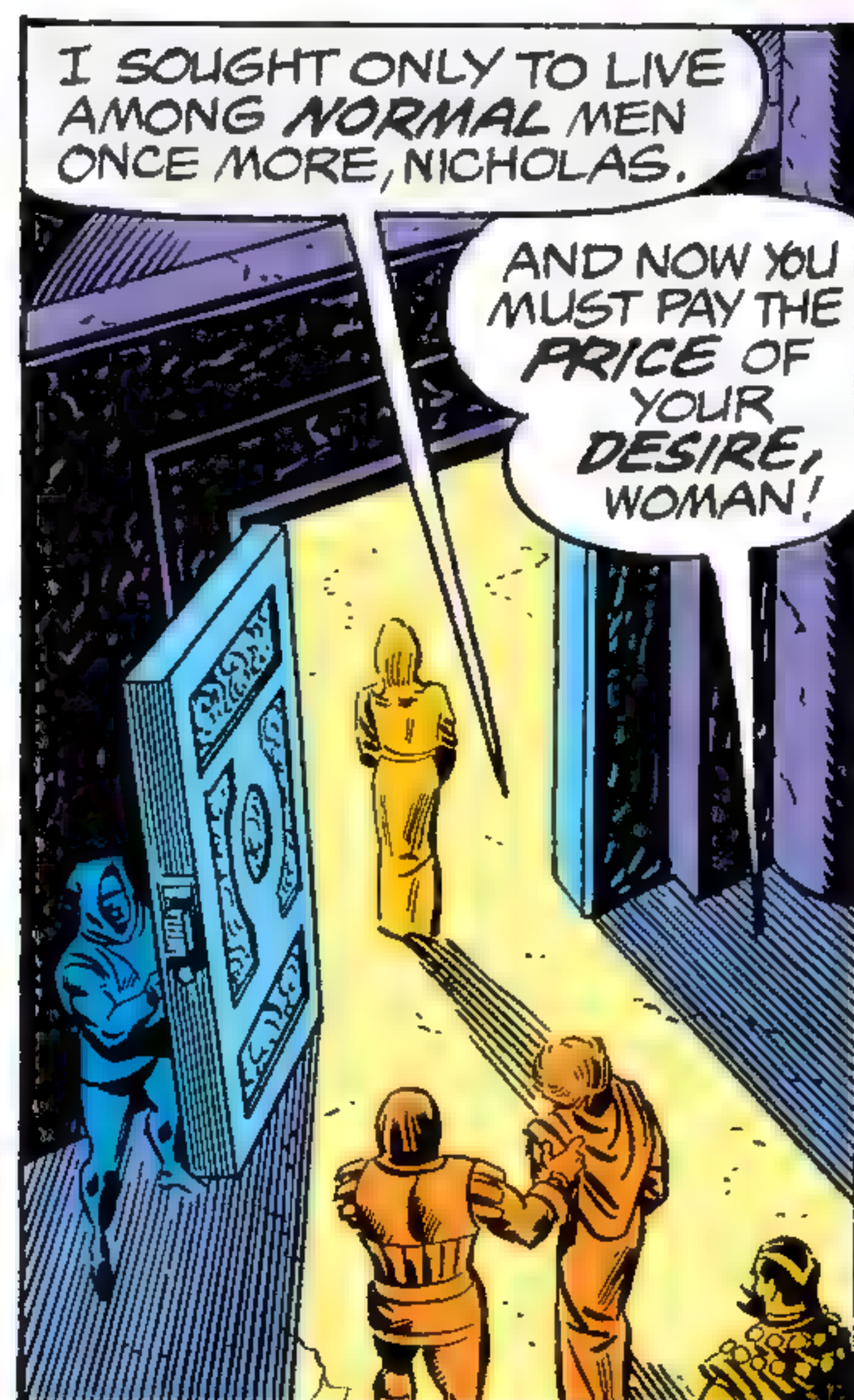
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, NICHOLAS?

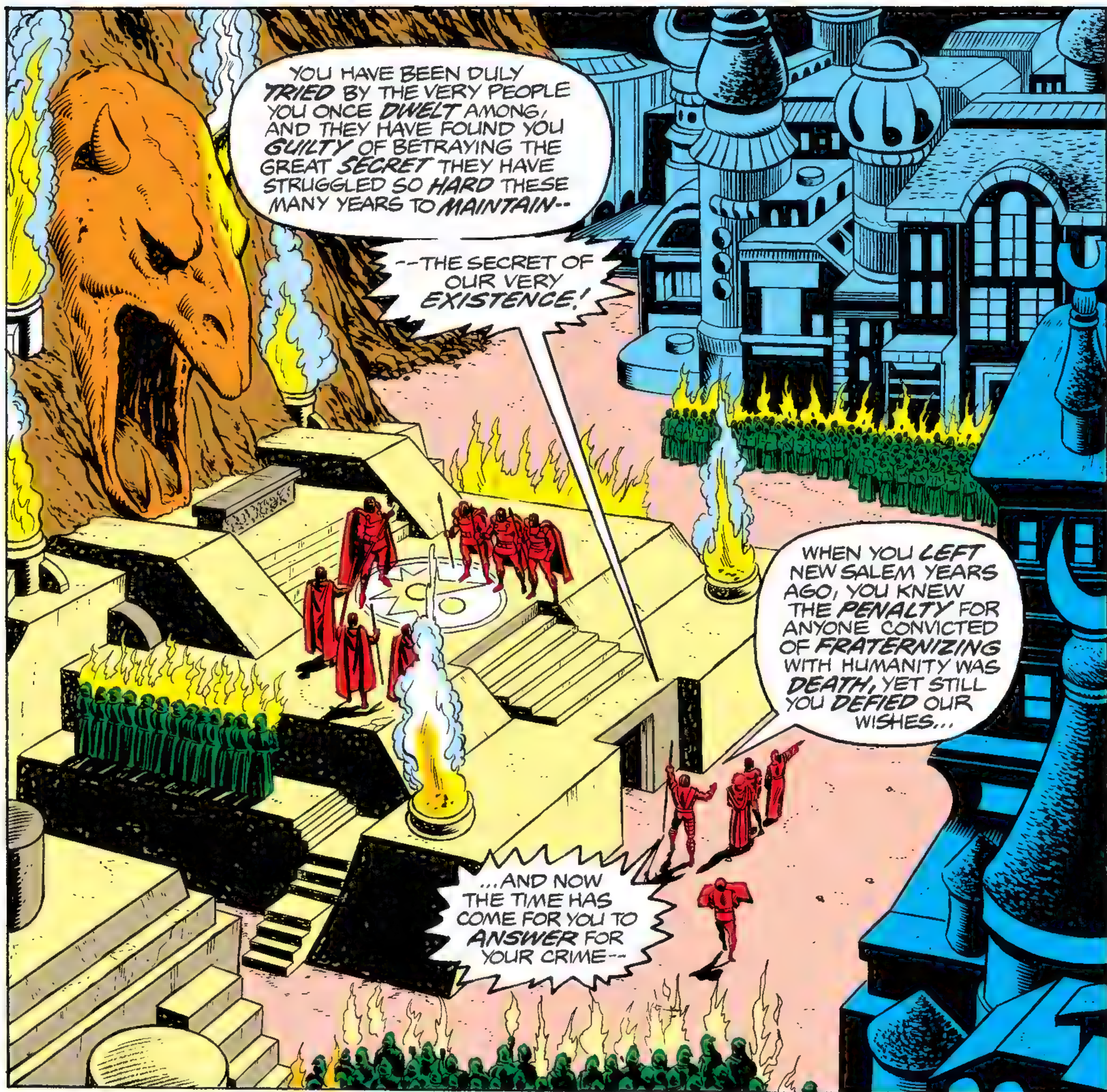
IT'S WHAT YOU DESERVE, OLD WOMAN, FOR DESERTING YOUR PEOPLE... FOR DESERTING ME!



I SOUGHT ONLY TO LIVE AMONG NORMAL MEN ONCE MORE, NICHOLAS.

AND NOW YOU MUST PAY THE PRICE OF YOUR DESIRE, WOMAN!





YOU HAVE BEEN DULY **TRIED** BY THE VERY PEOPLE YOU ONCE **DWELT** AMONG, AND THEY HAVE FOUND YOU **GUILTY** OF BETRAYING THE GREAT **SECRET** THEY HAVE STRUGGLED SO **HARD** THESE MANY YEARS TO **MAINTAIN**--

--THE SECRET OF OUR VERY **EXISTENCE!**

WHEN YOU **LEFT** NEW SALEM YEARS AGO, YOU KNEW THE **PENALTY** FOR ANYONE CONVICTED OF **FRATERNIZING** WITH HUMANITY WAS **DEATH**, YET STILL YOU **DEFIED** OUR WISHES...

...AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO **ANSWER** FOR YOUR CRIME--



THE **LAW** YOU SPEAK OF IS AN **ARCHAIC** LAW, NICHOLAS -- ONE WHICH HAD NOT BEEN EMPLOYED FOR MANY YEARS **BEFORE** I LEFT HERE!

THIS SO-CALLED **TRIAL** YOU SAY I HAVE RECEIVED IS A BLATANT **MOCKERY** OF JUSTICE!

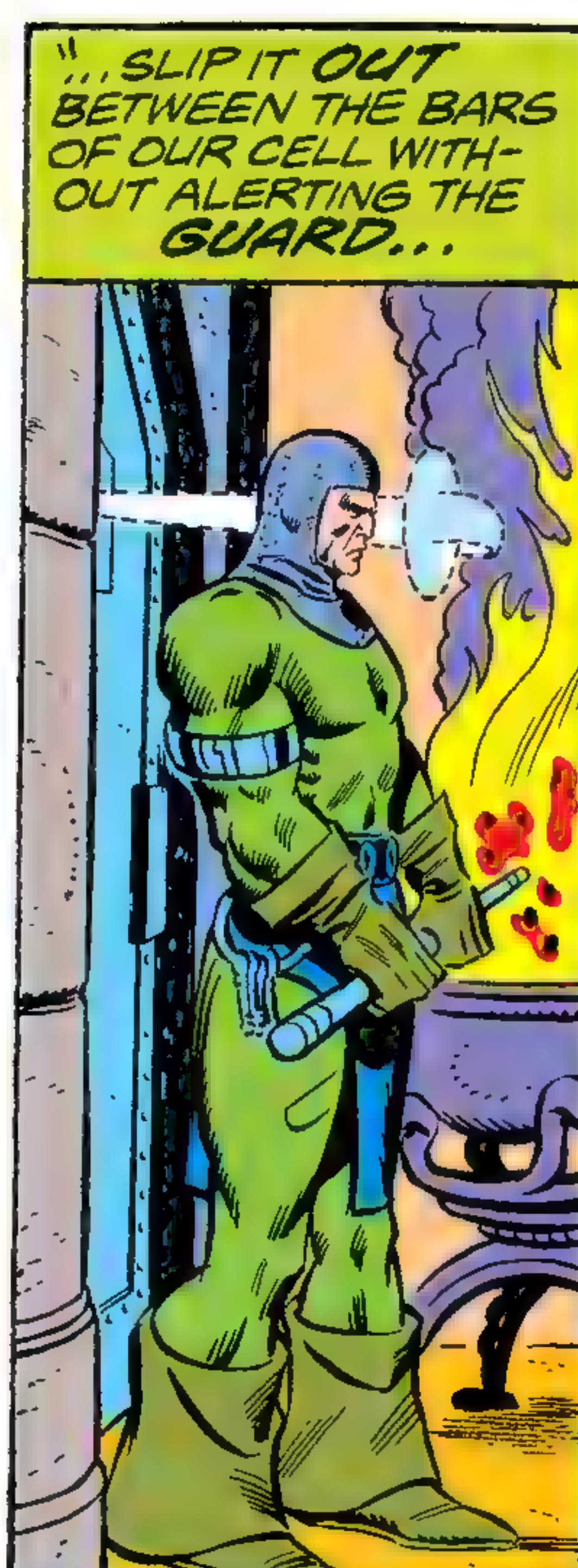
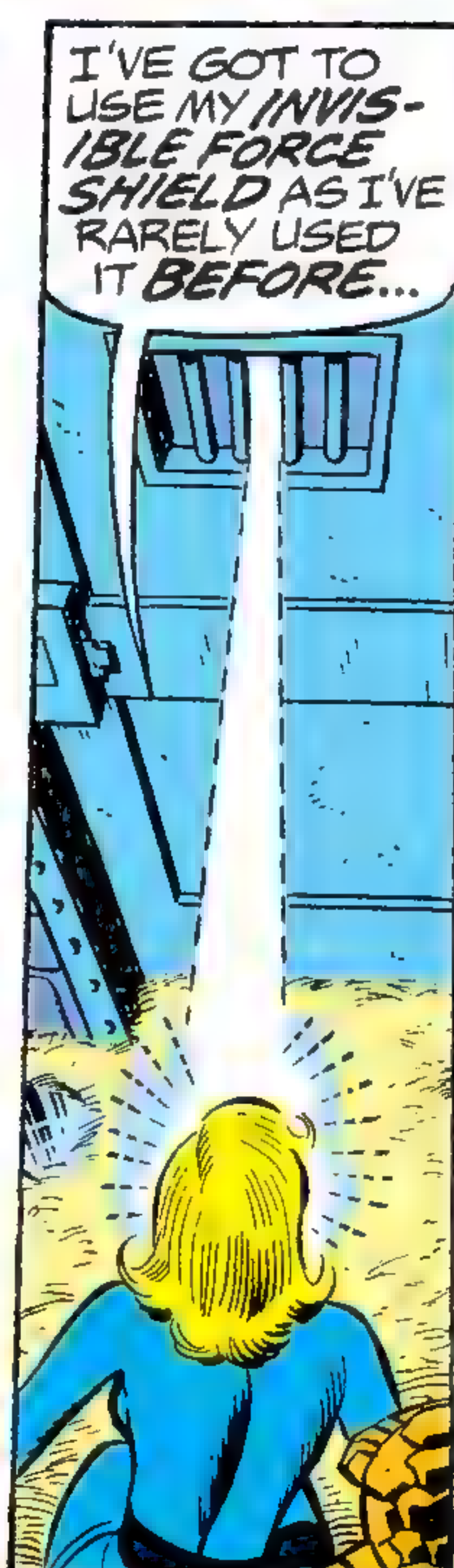
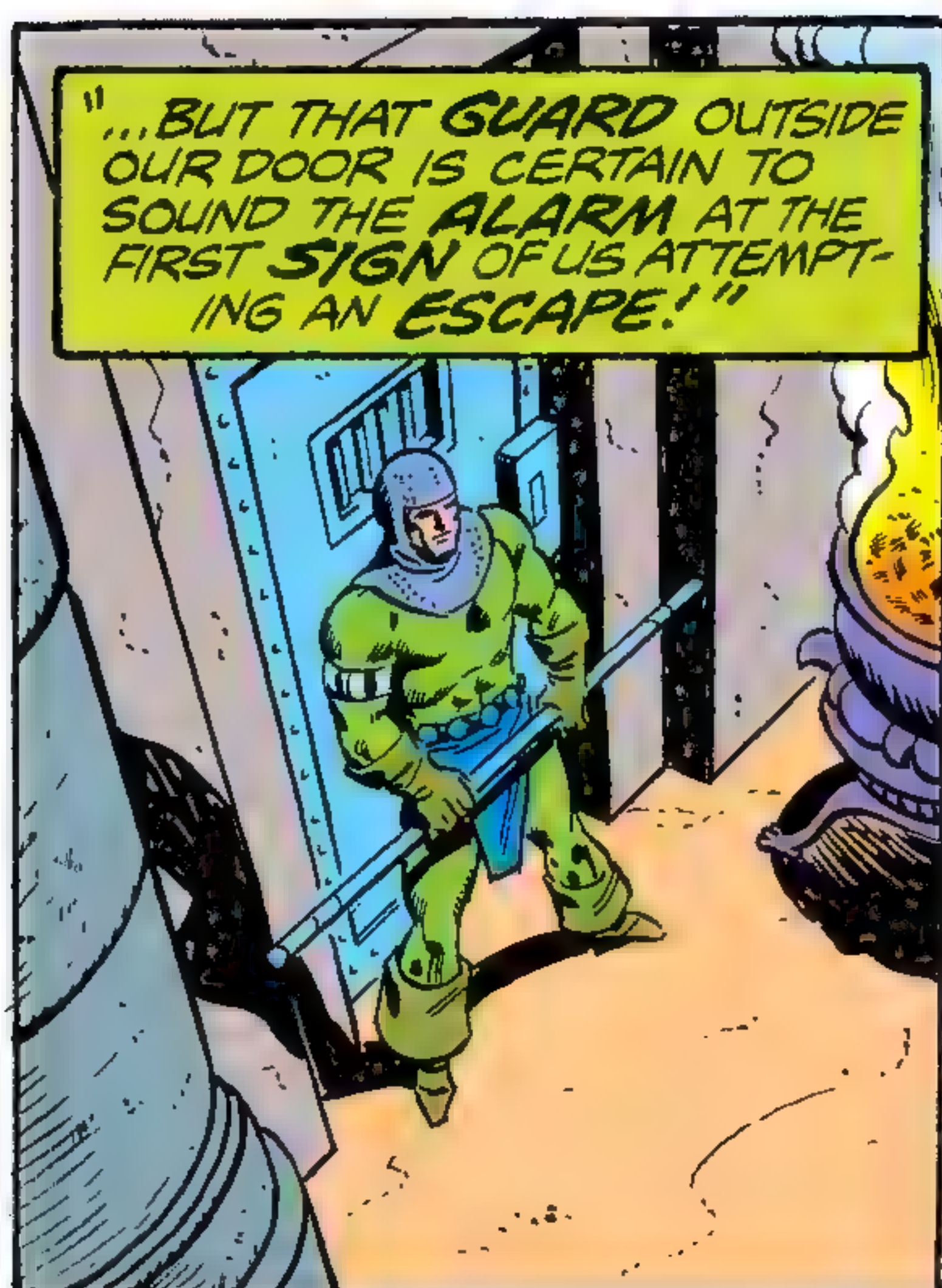
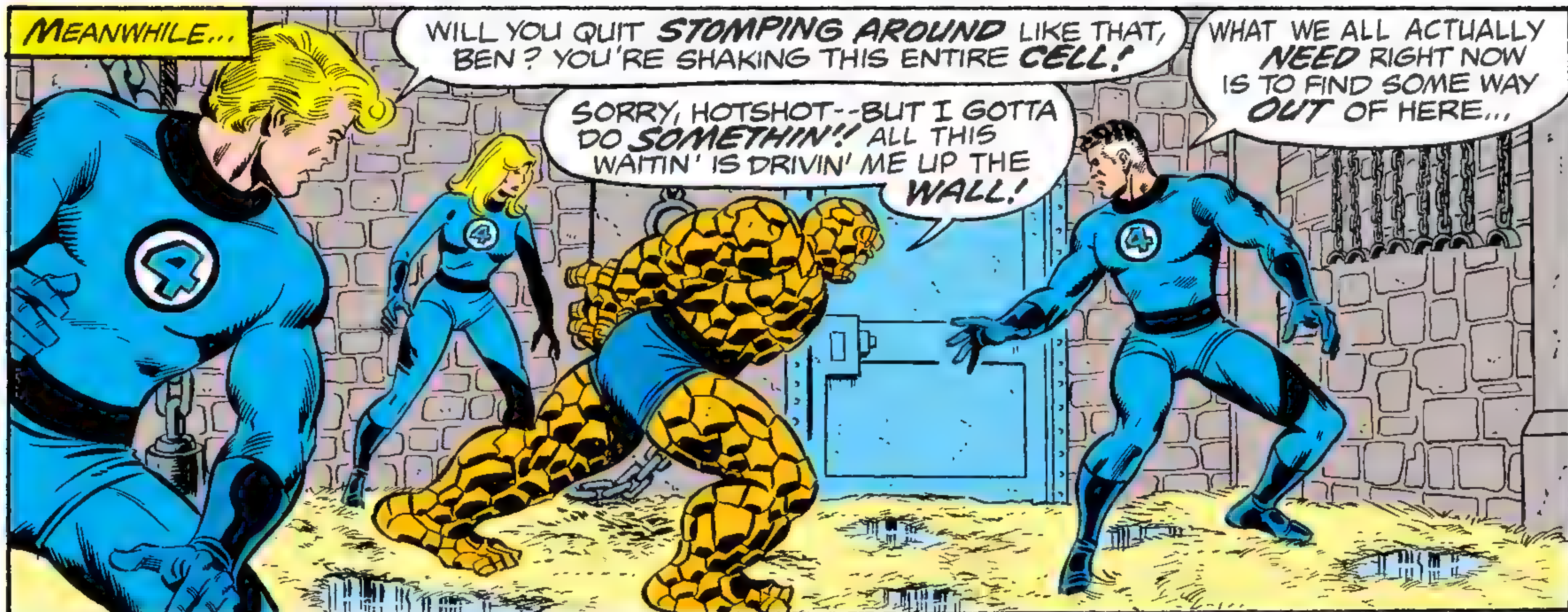
PERHAPS, OLD WOMAN...

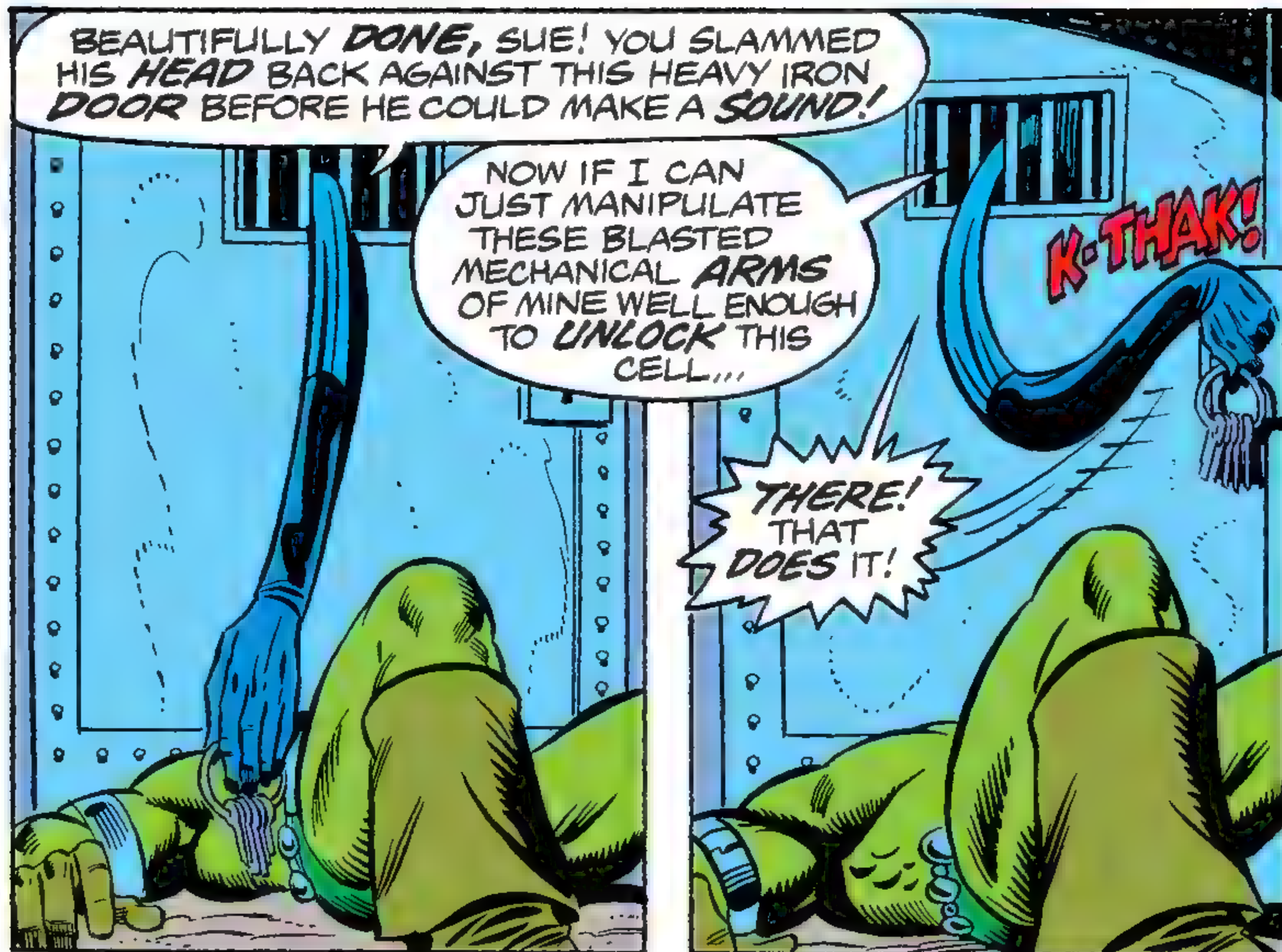


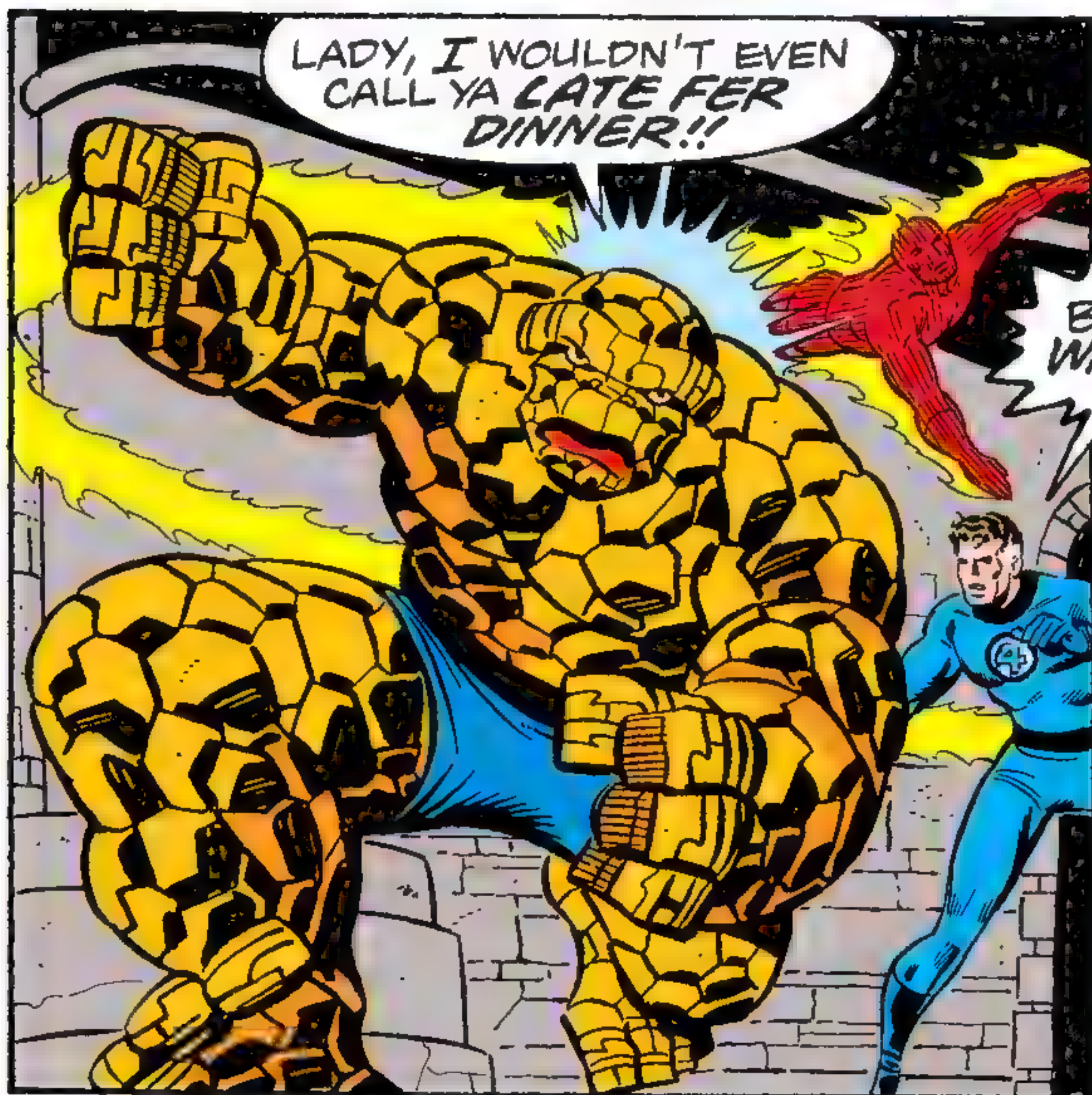
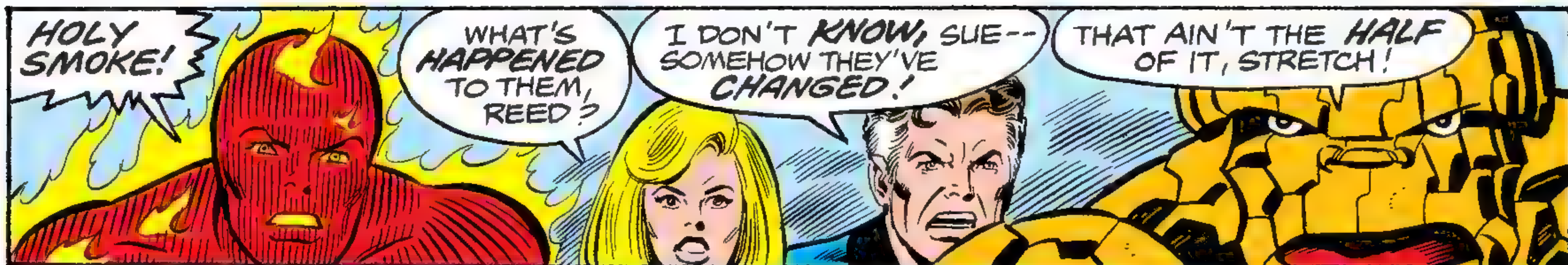
...BUT WHEN THE **SENTENCE** PASSED UPON YOU BY THIS "KANGAROO COURT" HAS AT LAST BEEN **CARRIED OUT**...

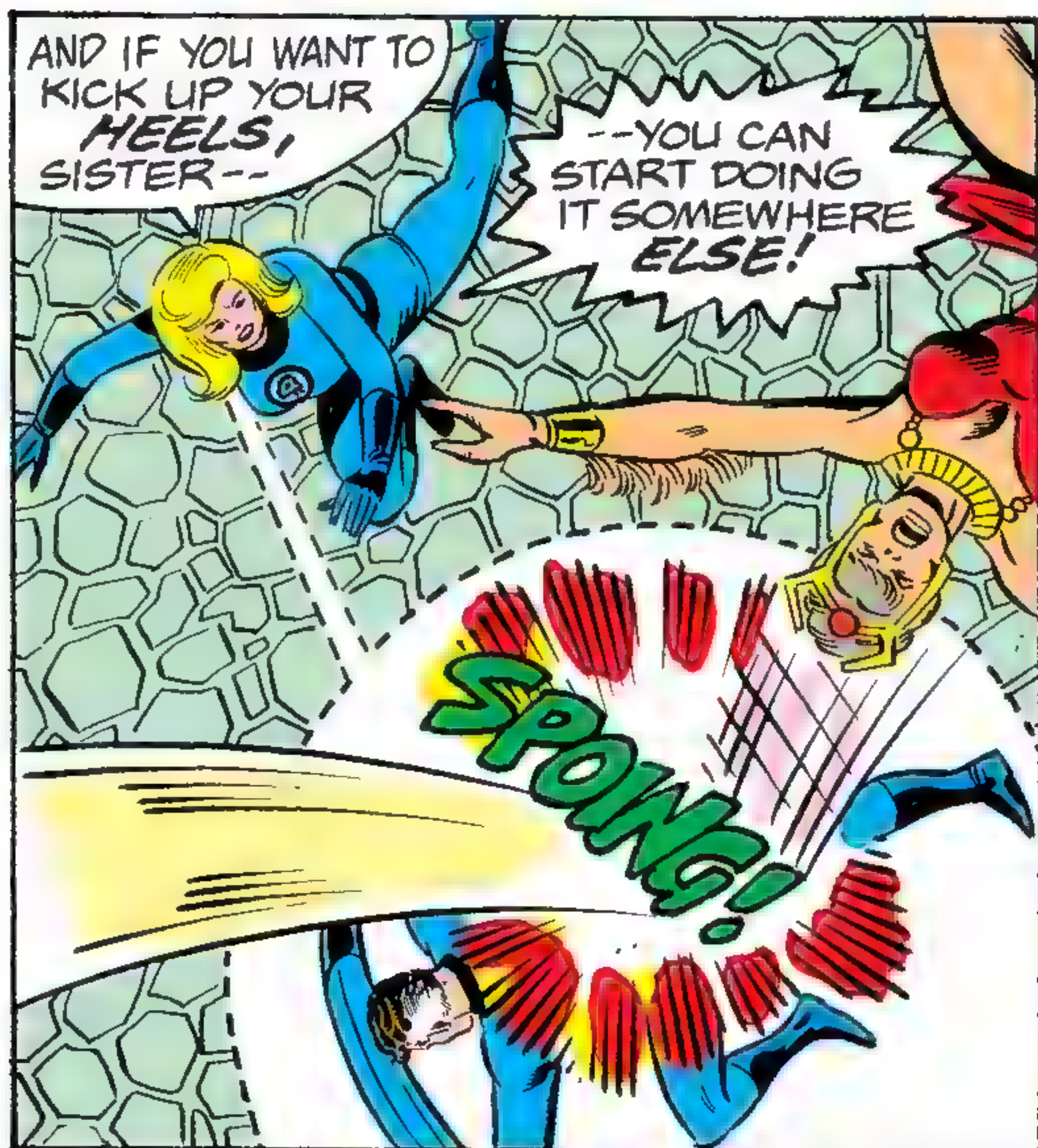
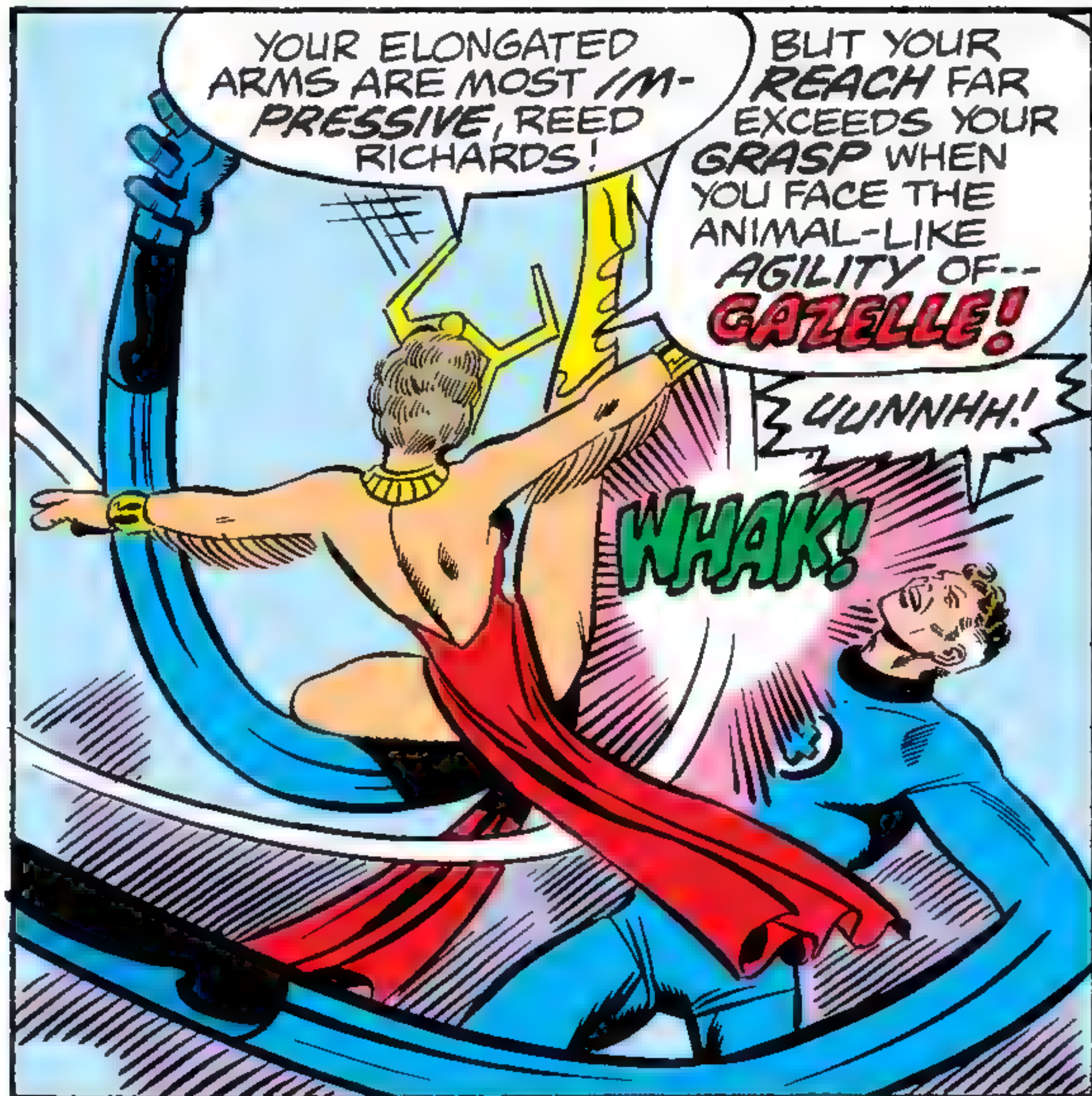
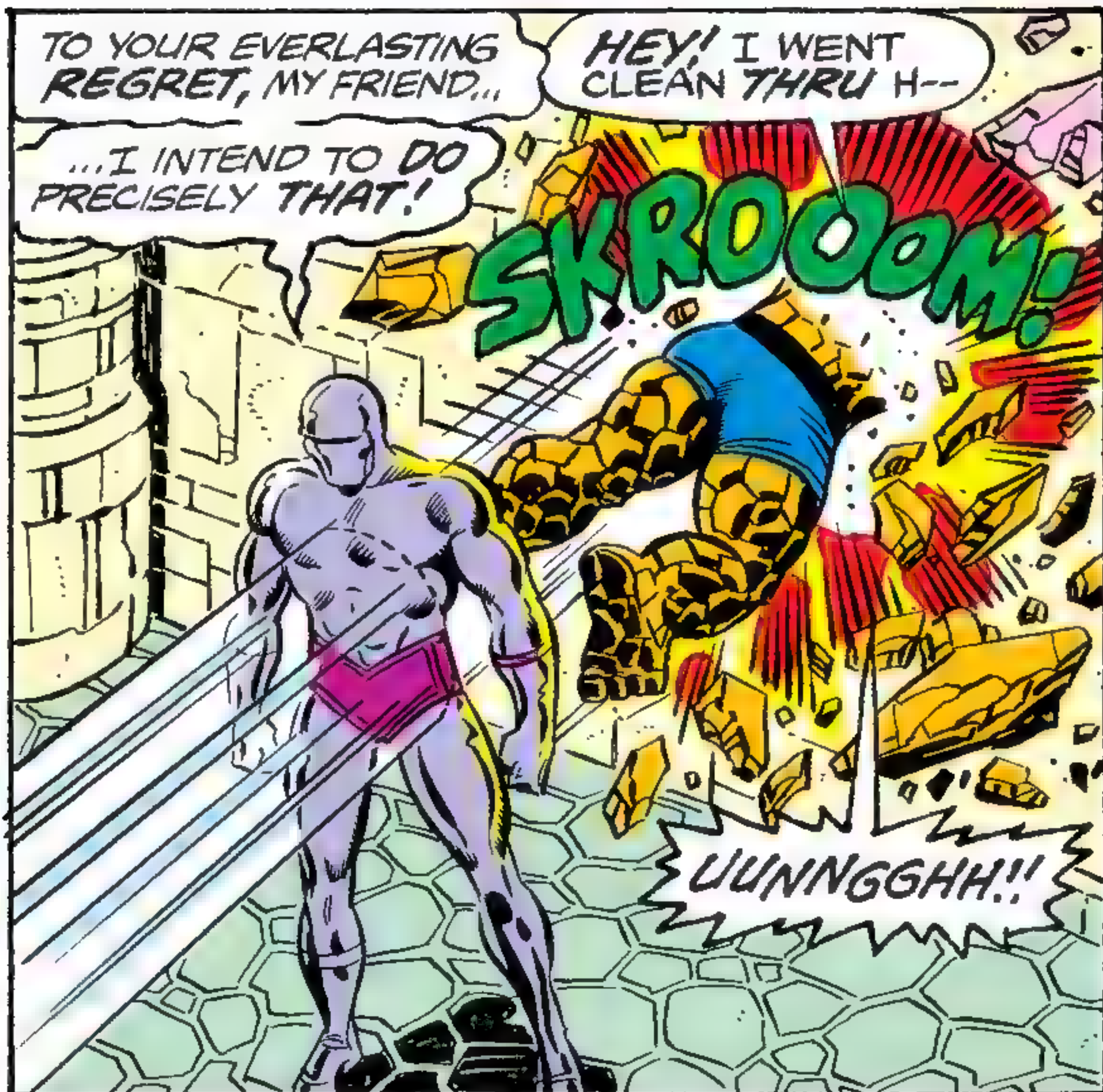


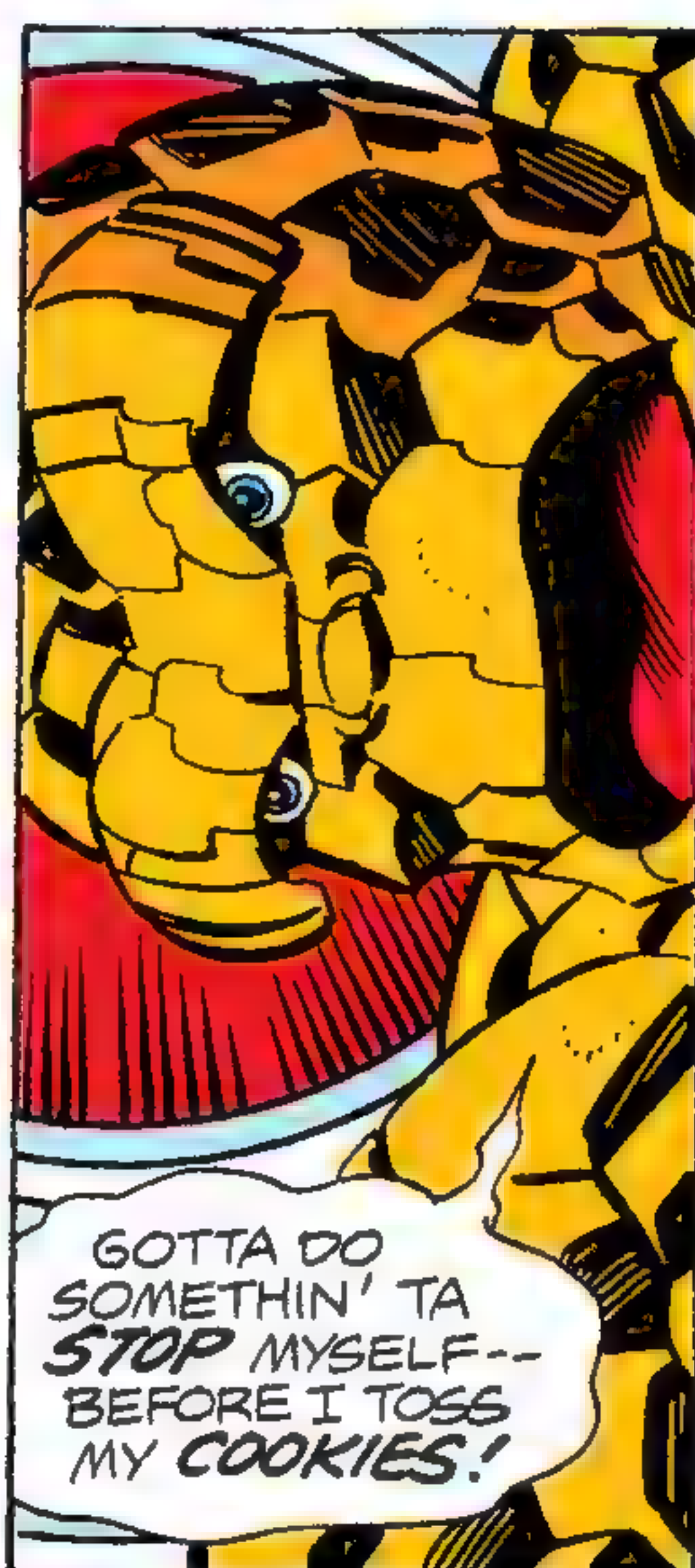
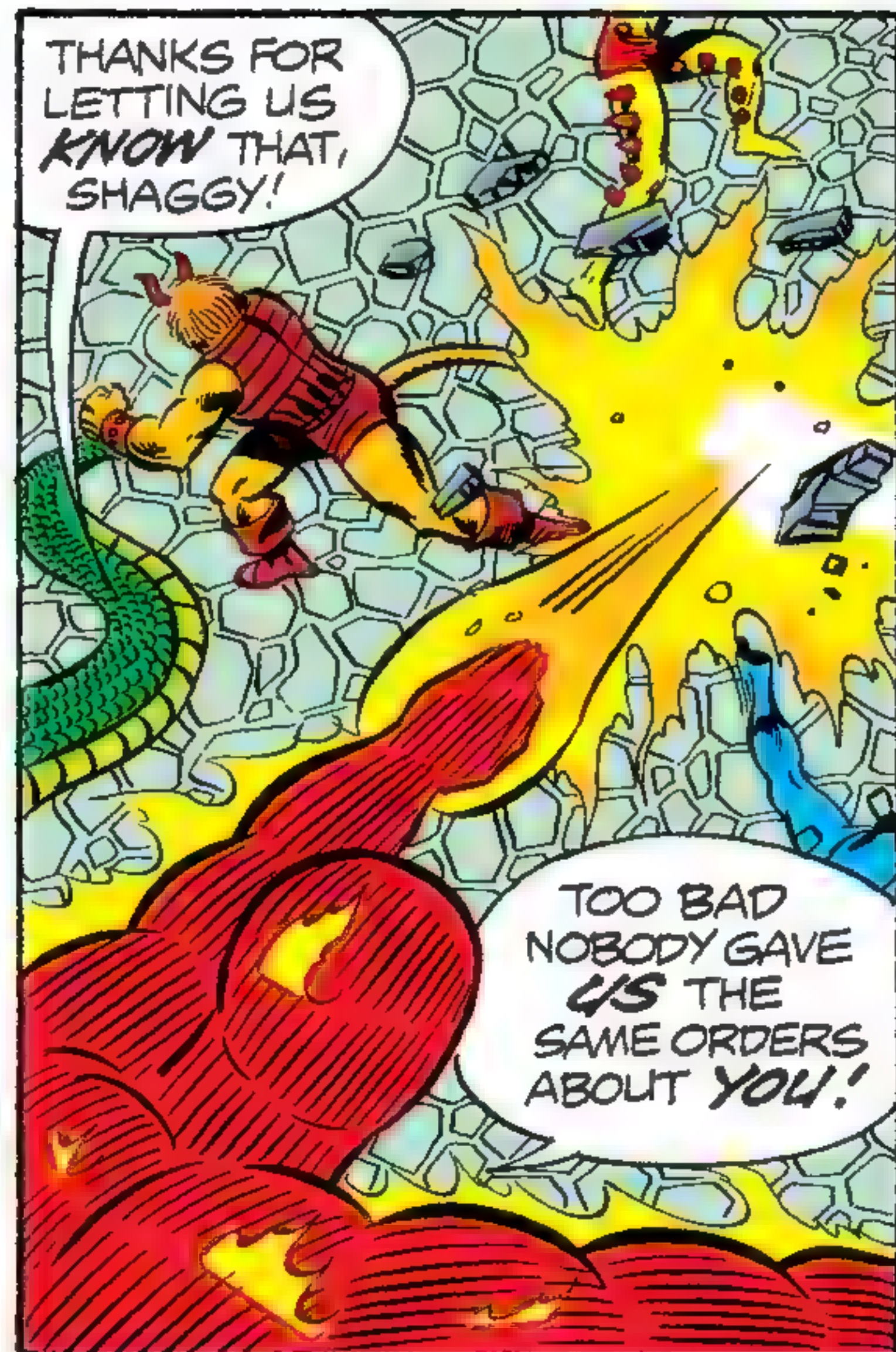
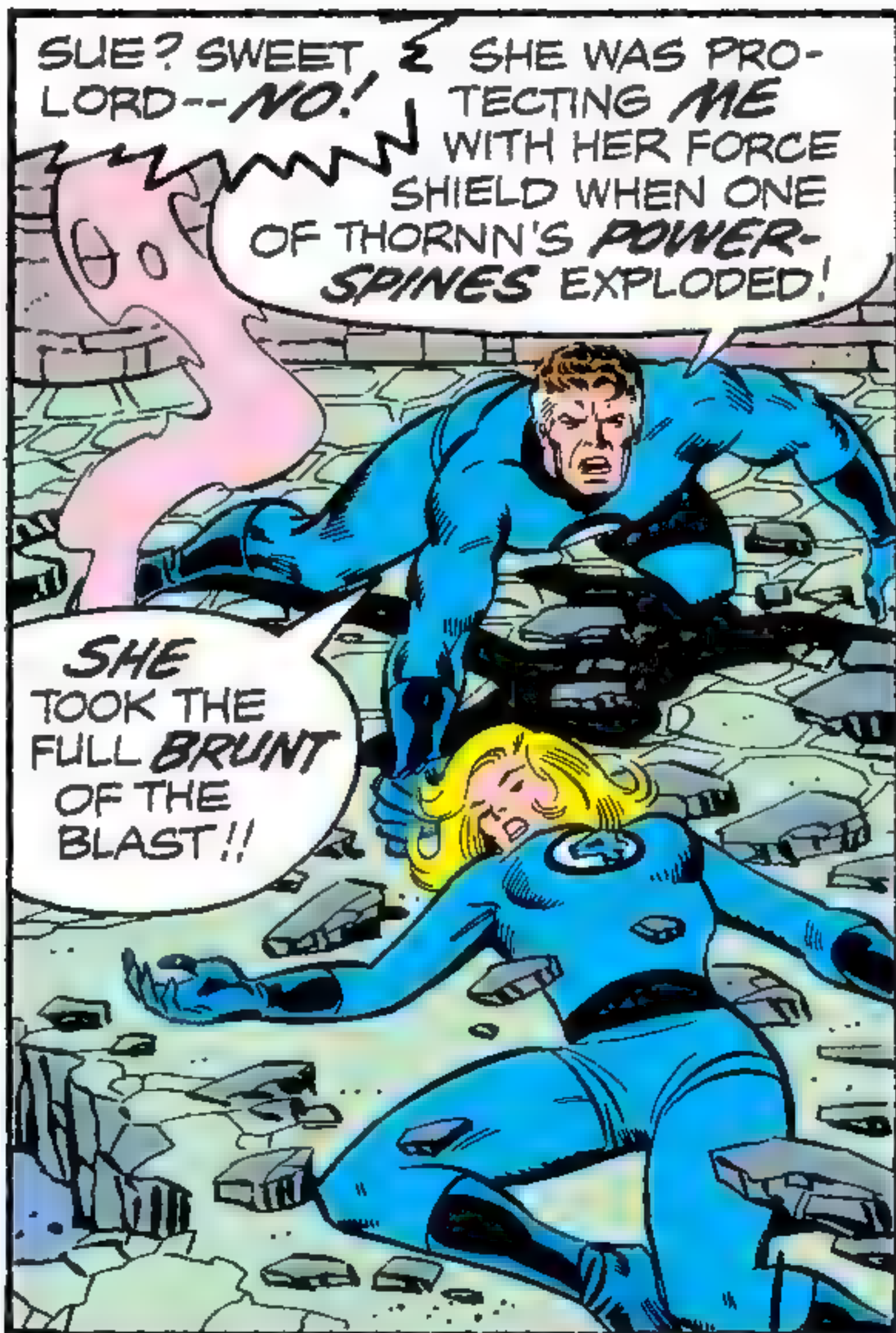
...MOCKERY OR NOT, YOU WILL BE JUST AS **DEAD!!!**













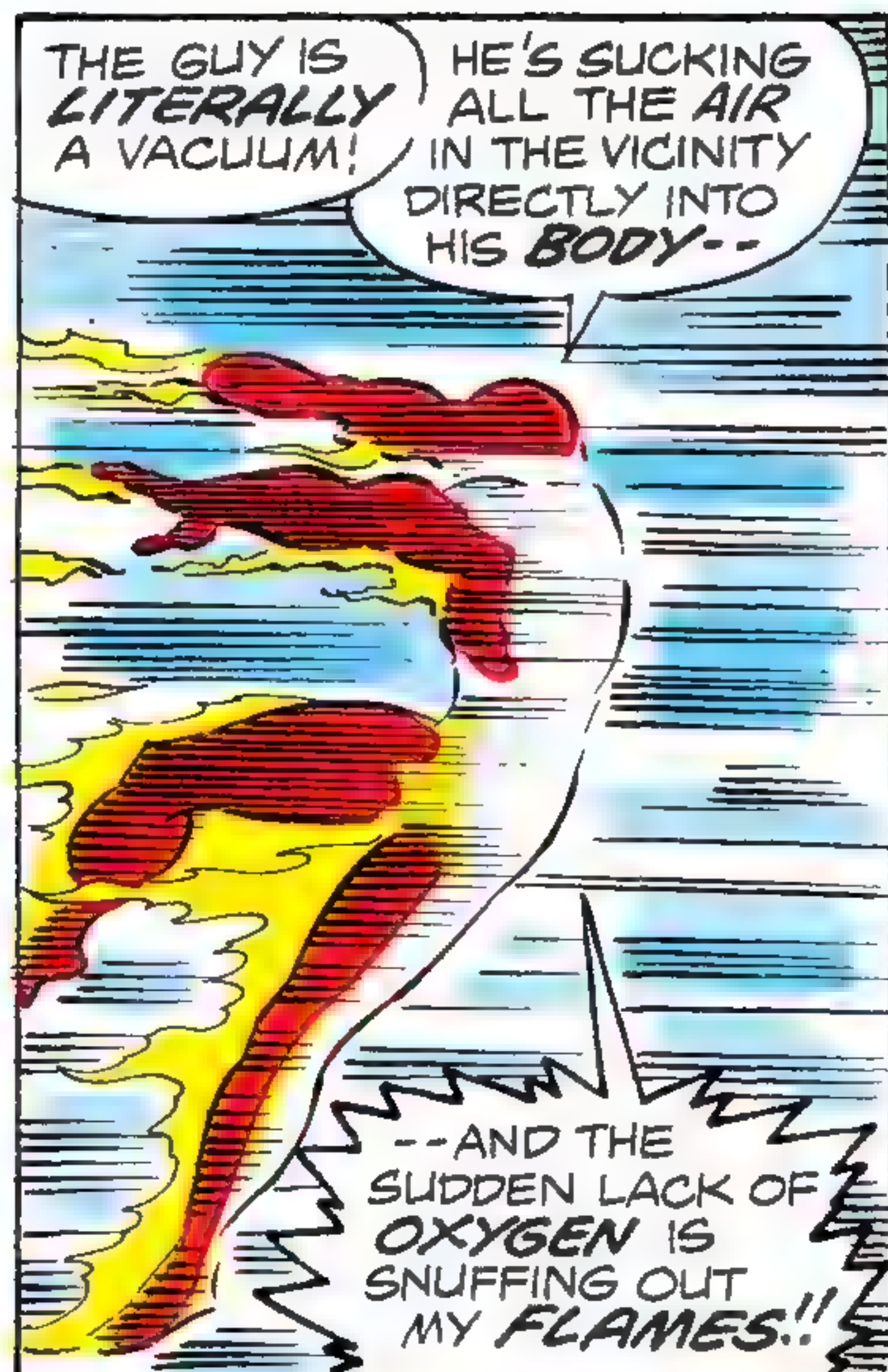
WAY **AHEAD** OF YOU, BOSS MAN! A LITTLE **HOTFOOT** SHOULD KEEP THAT SPACE LADY **BUSY** LONG ENOUGH FOR BEN TO CLEAR HIS **HEAD**!

YOU STRIKE **WELL**, JOHNNY STORM--BUT IN **VAIN**!



FOR THE ABILITY TO BECOME **IMMATERIAL** IS BUT **ONE** OF MY MANY **POWERS**!

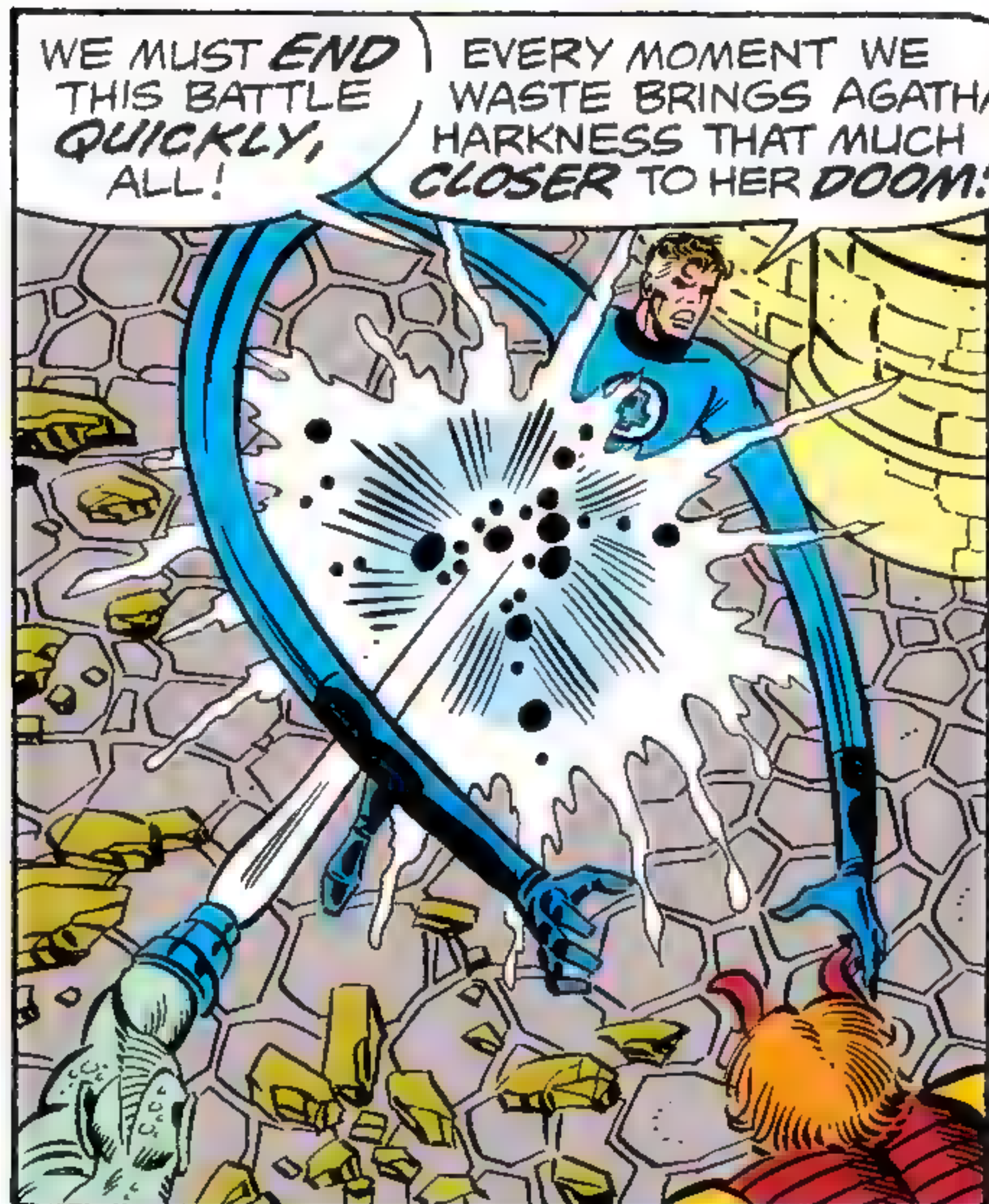
HOLY SMOKE!



THE GUY IS **LITERALLY** A VACUUM!

HE'S SUCKING ALL THE **AIR** IN THE VICINITY DIRECTLY INTO HIS **BODY**--

--AND THE SUDDEN LACK OF **OXYGEN** IS SNUFFING OUT MY **FLAMES**!!



WE MUST **END** THIS BATTLE **QUICKLY**, ALL!

EVERY MOMENT WE WASTE BRINGS AGATHA HARKNESS THAT MUCH **CLOSER** TO HER **DOOM**!



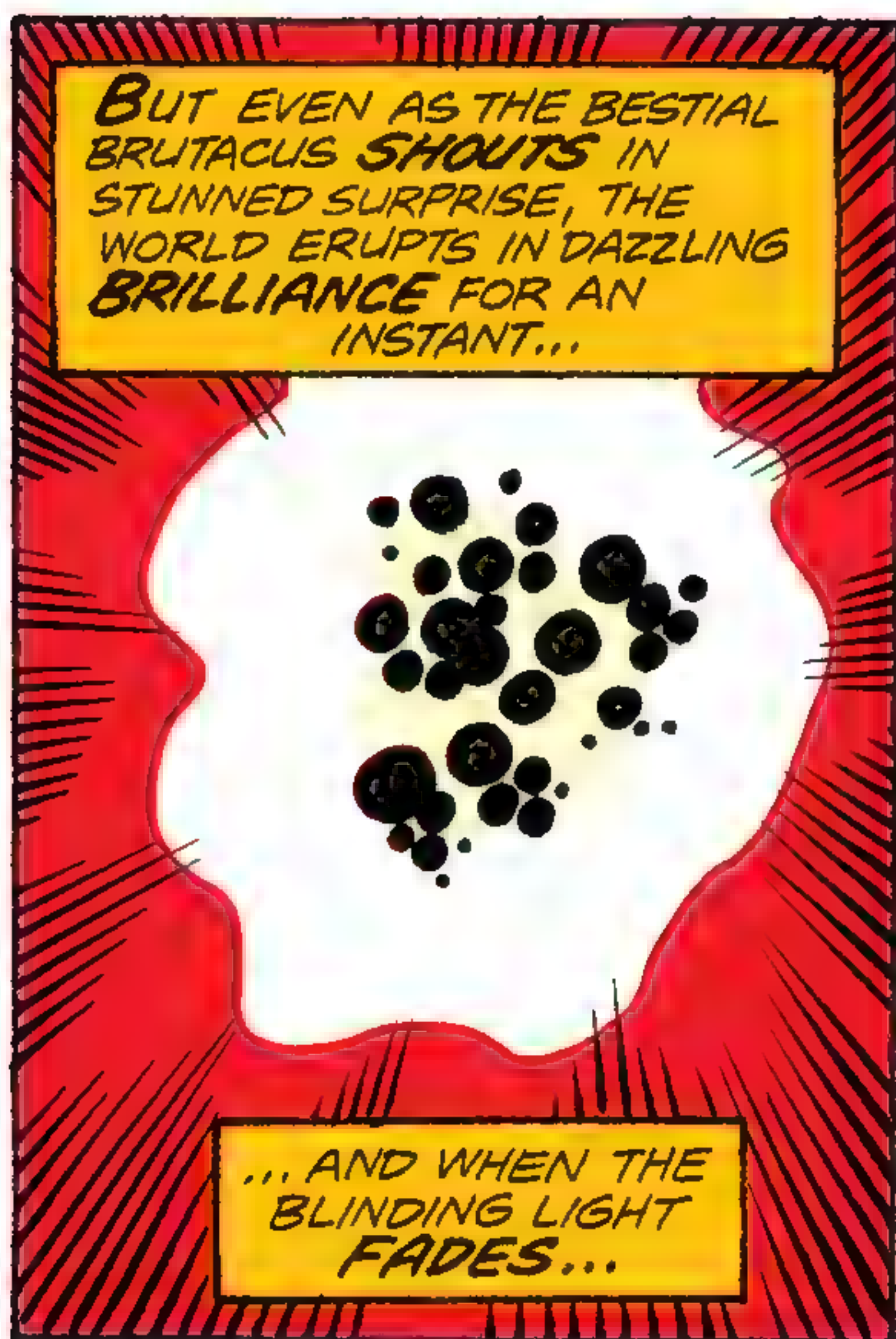
AND YOU TO **YOURS**, FOOL--

--IF YOU DO NOT **SURRENDER** BEFORE...



SKRAK!

HIS **ARMS**--THEY'RE **ARTIFICIAL**--?!!



BUT EVEN AS THE BESTIAL BRUTACUS **SHOUTS** IN STUNNED SURPRISE, THE WORLD ERUPTS IN DAZZLING **BRILLIANCE** FOR AN **INSTANT**...

...AND WHEN THE **BLINDING LIGHT** **FADES**...



THE SPELL THAT **TRANSFORMED** US COULD WORK SOLELY AGAINST THE **NATURAL** POWERS OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**!

BY UTILIZING **ARTIFICIAL** MEANS AGAINST US, YOU HAVE **RETURNED** US TO WHAT WE **WERE**!

WELL, IN **THAT** CASE, CUDDLES...



...GUESS WHAT **TIME** IT IS!

AND IN THE NAME OF COMMON DECENCY, WE'D BEST TURN OUR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE...

MY FRIENDS, IN CENTURIES AGONE, WE WHO WERE **WITCHES** LED LIVES OF GREAT PERSECUTION!

IN OLD SALEM, OUR FELLOWS WERE **SLAIN** FOR THEIR BELIEFS--AND THUS, WE WHO REMAINED LEFT HUMANITY **BEHIND**, AND FOUNDED OUR OWN **COMMUNITY!**

WE CALLED THIS CITY **NEW SALEM**, SO THAT WE WOULD NEVER **FORGET** OUR YEARS OF **SUFFERING**--AND SWORE NEVER TO **INVOLVE** OURSELVES WITH MORTAL MEN **AGAIN!**

BUT AGATHA HARKNESS HAS **DEFIED** OUR LAWS! FOR REASONS YET **UNEXPLAINED**, SHE WHO WAS ONCE OUR **LEADER** DEPARTED NEW SALEM--

--AND COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN OF **REVEALING** OUR EXISTENCE TO THOSE OF THE **OUTSIDE WORLD!**

"NOW SHE MUST **PAY** FOR HER CRIME!"

"AT MY COMMAND, YOU SEVEN SHALL RAISE YOUR **POWER-STAFFS** AND..."

SKRAKA-BOOM!

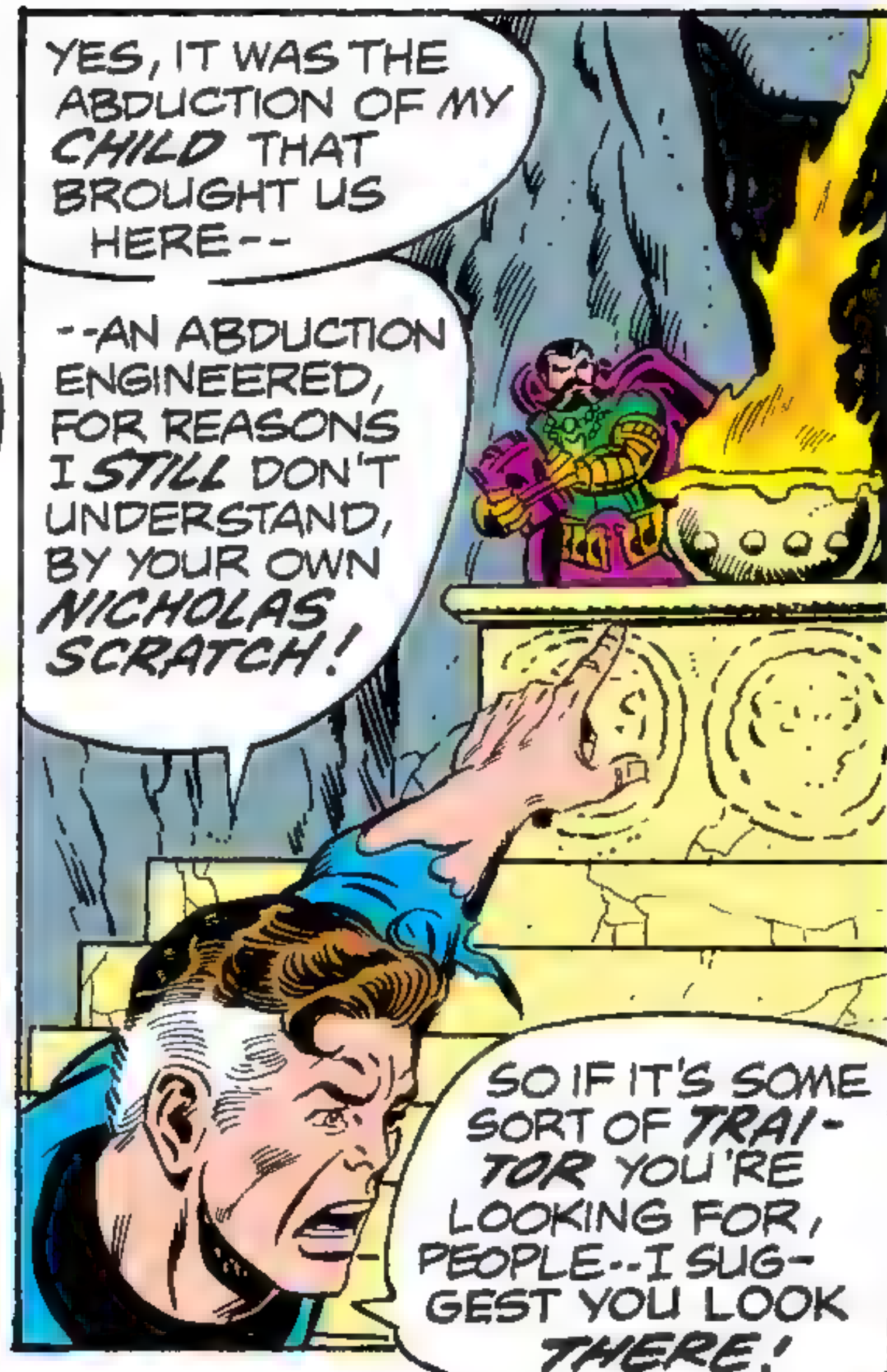
BY THE **SEVEN-SIDED CIRCLE!!**

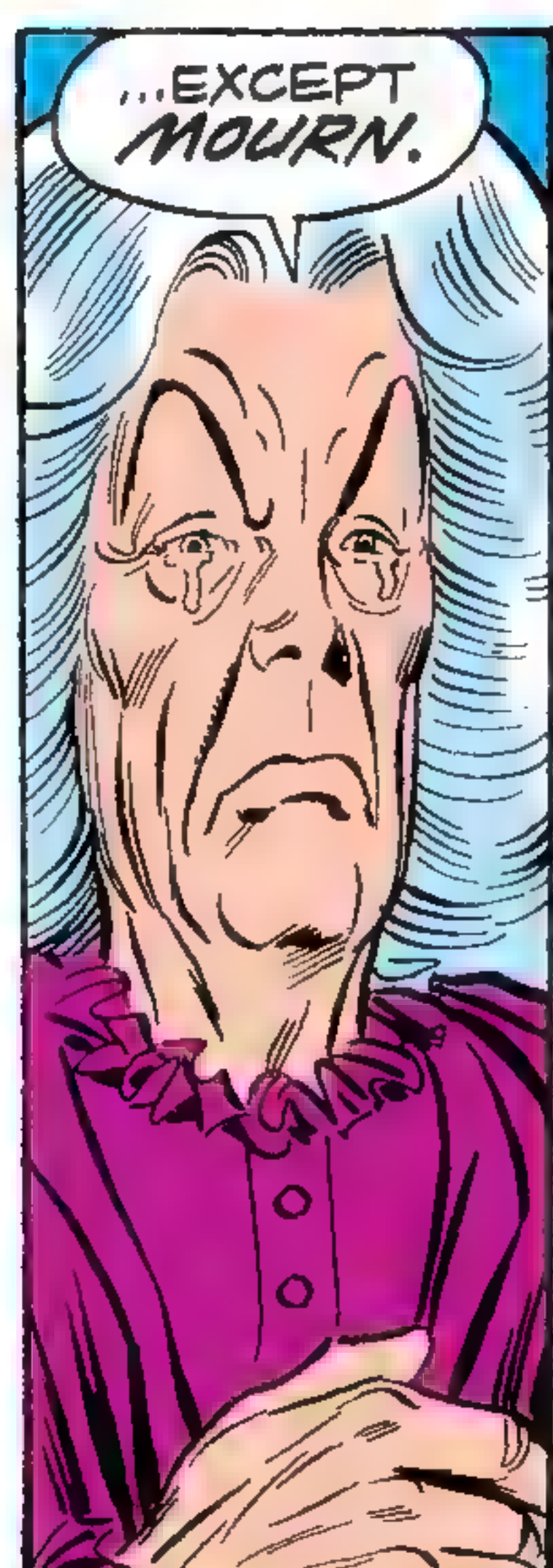
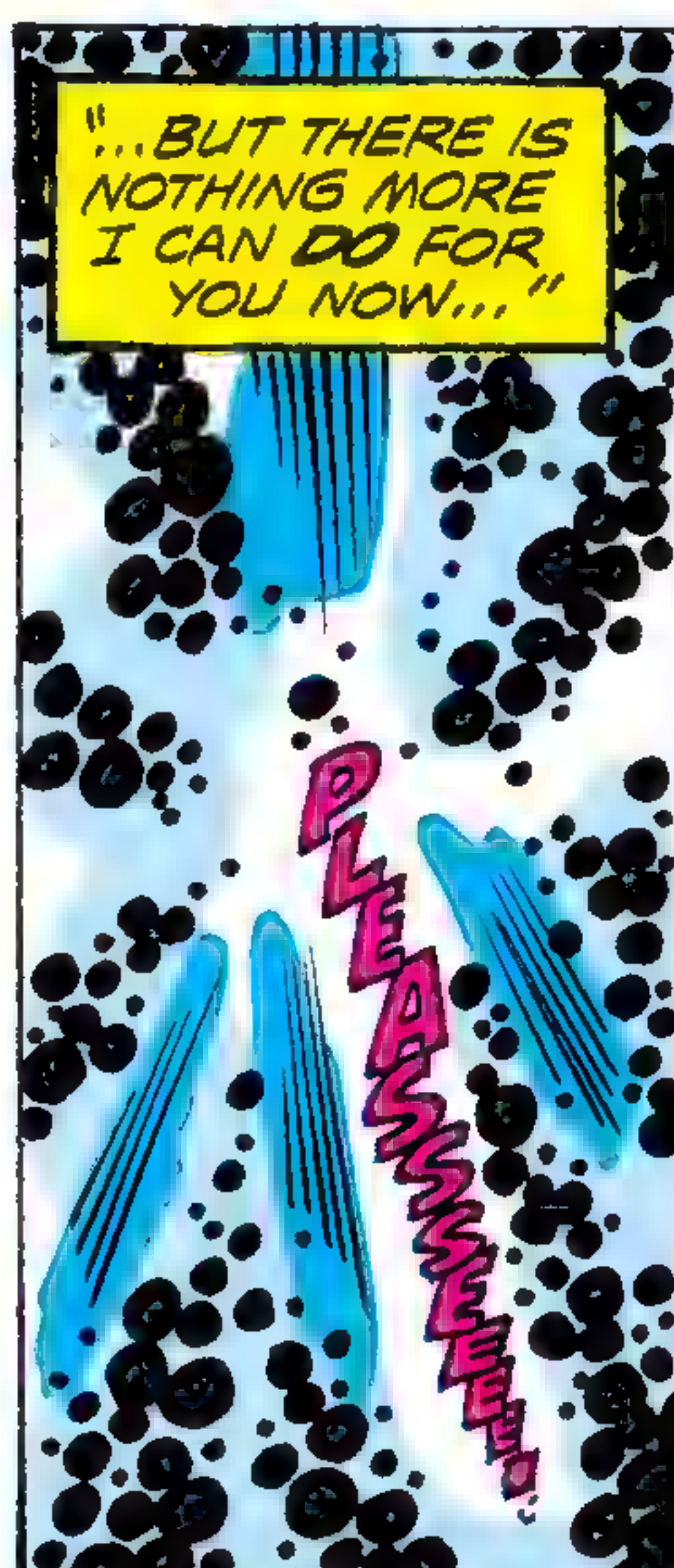
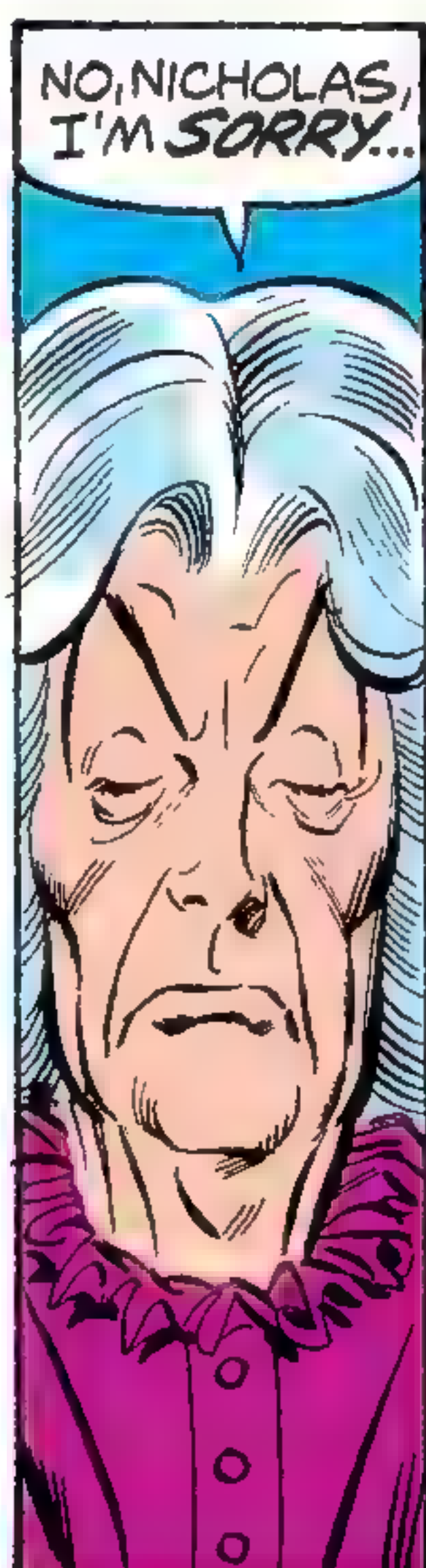
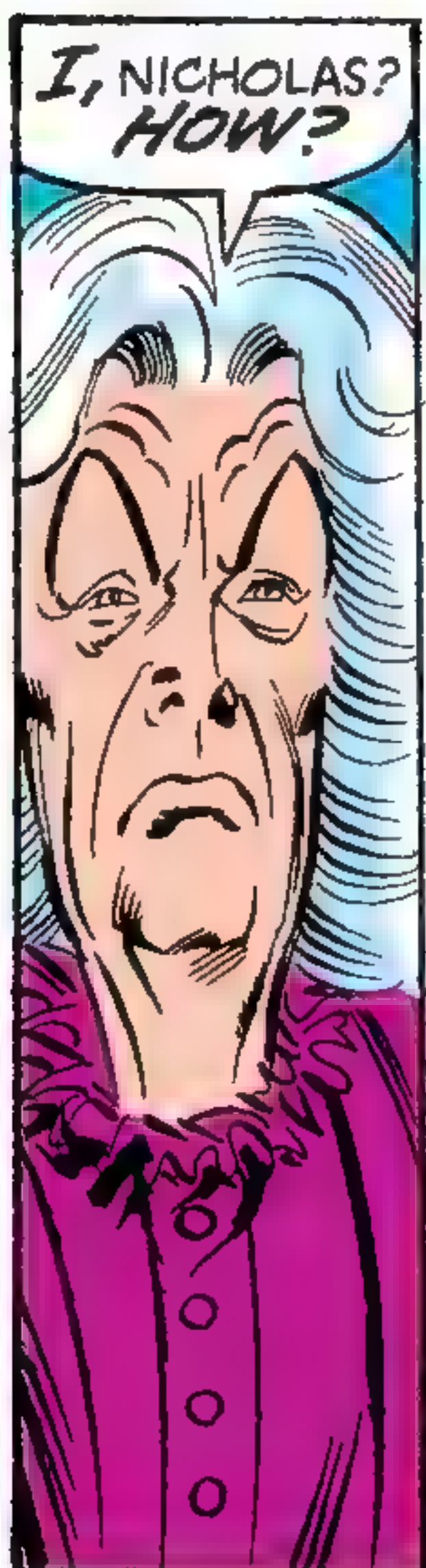
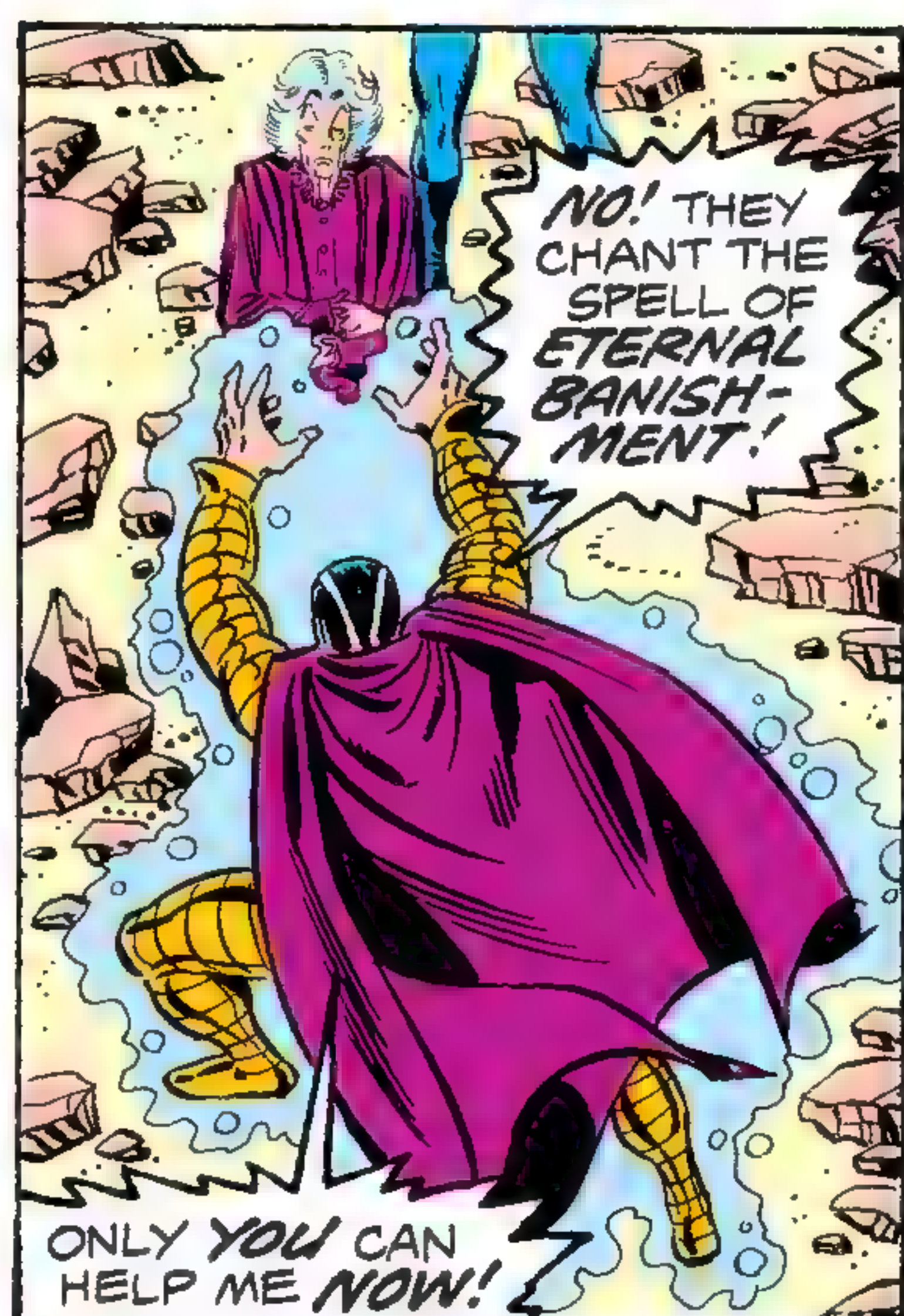
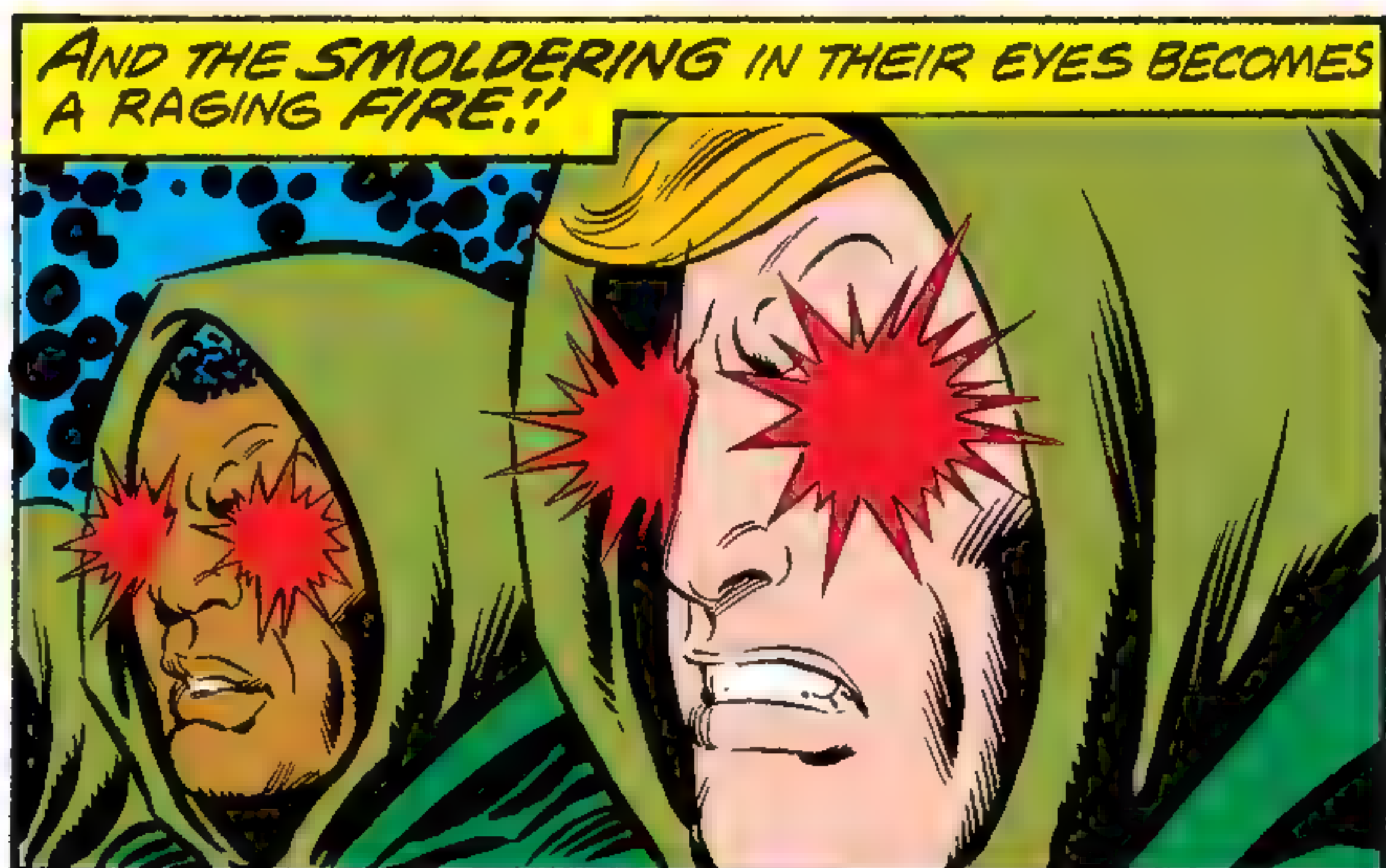
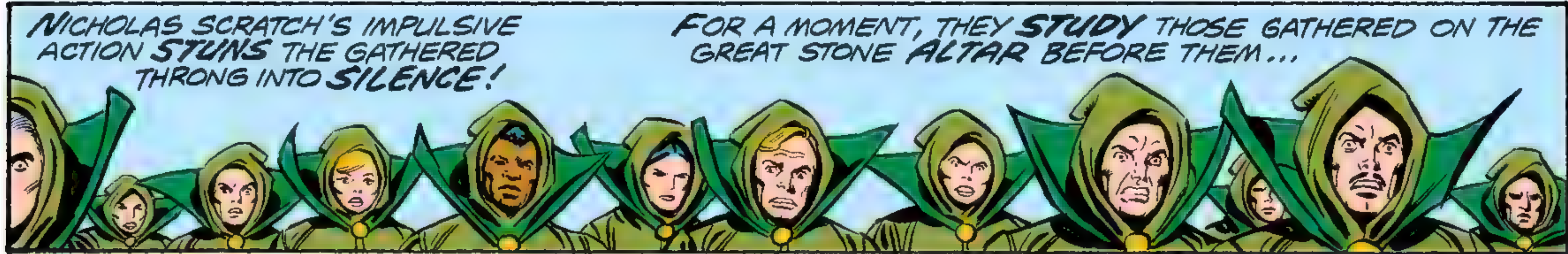
WHAT MANNER OF **MADNESS** IS THIS?!

LIKE WE SAID **BEFORE**, SCRATCH--YOU **TOUCH** THAT LADY, AND THEY'LL HAVE TO **SCRAPE** YOU UP WITH A **SPOON!**

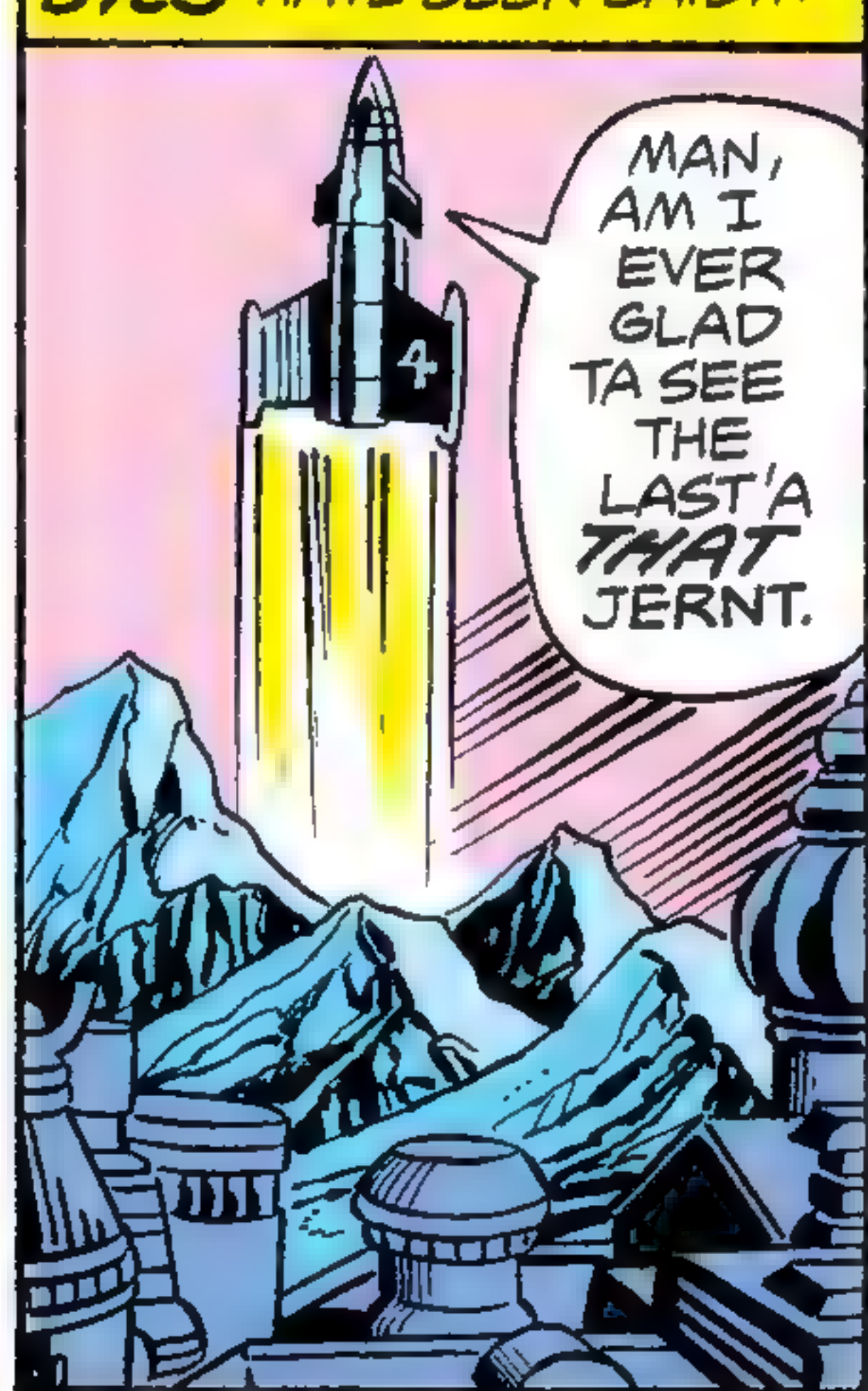
IT'S TIME TO PUT AN **END** TO THIS **INSANITY**, SCRATCH!

BEFORE WE PUT AN END TA YOU!





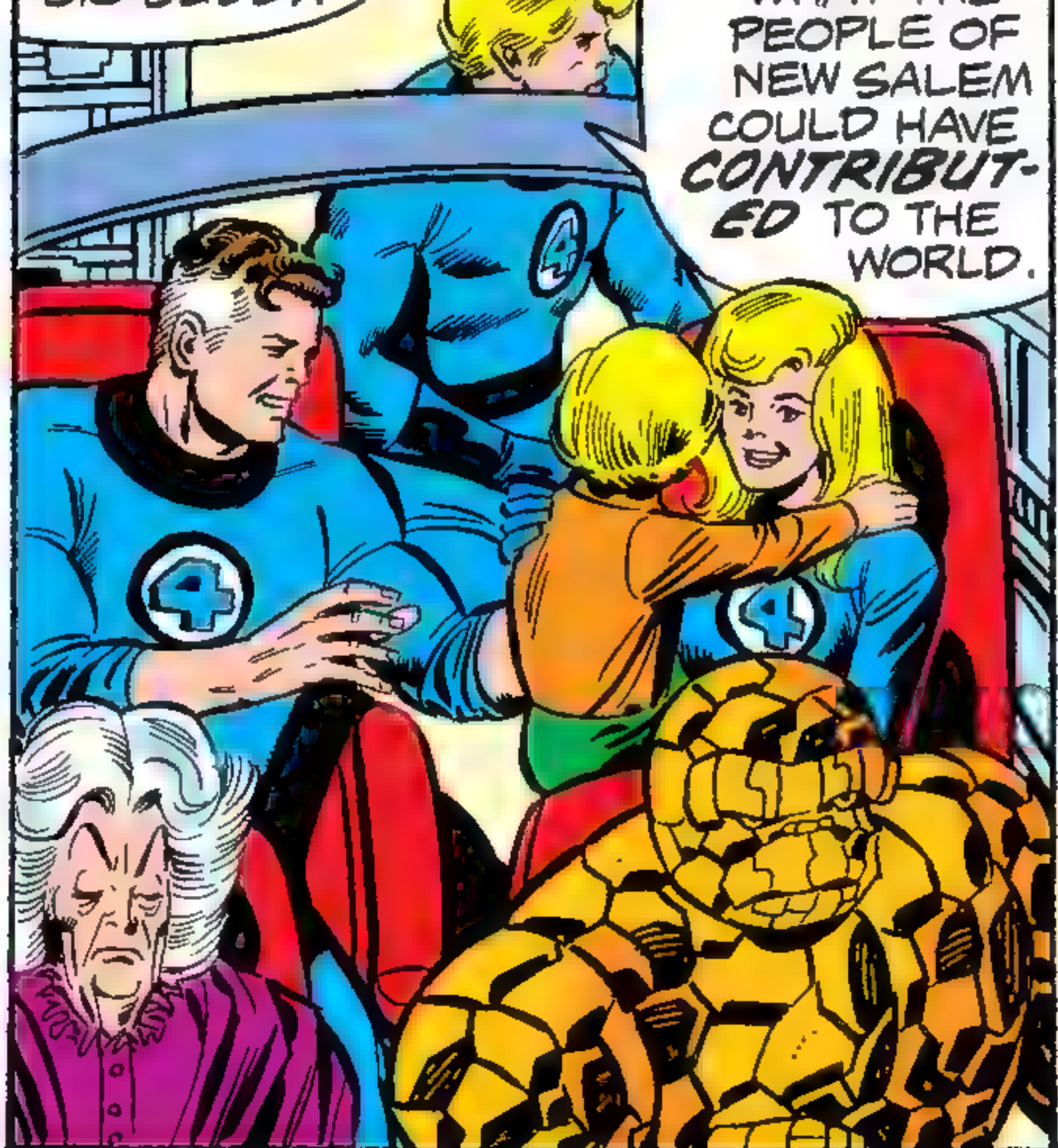
AND SHORTLY, AFTER THE APOLOGIES HAVE BEEN MADE, AND THE GOOD-BYES HAVE BEEN SAID...



MAN, AM I EVER GLAD TO SEE THE LAST 'A THAT JERNT.

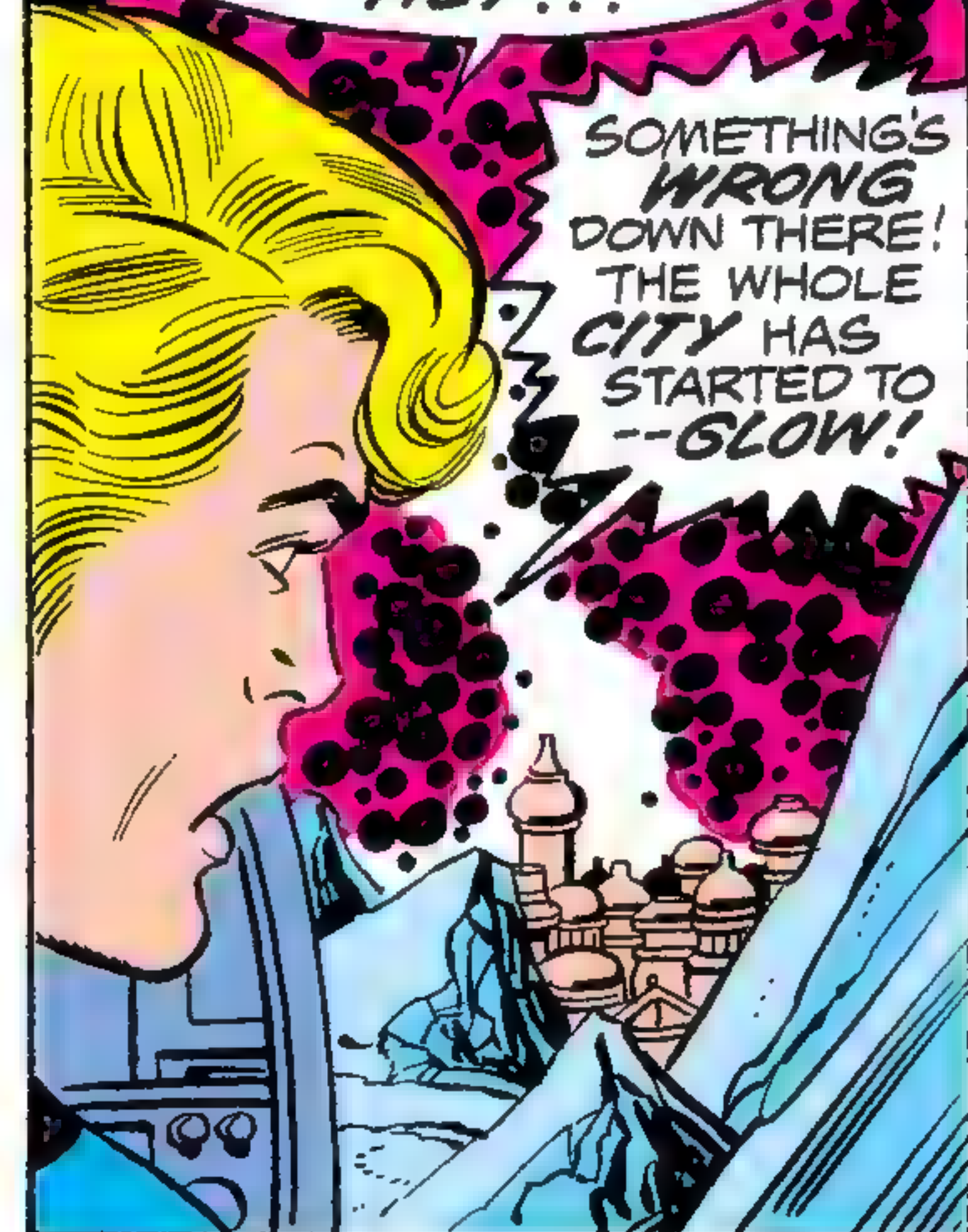
I'M INCLINED TO AGREE WITH YOU, BIG BUDDY.

BUT STILL, I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT THE PEOPLE OF NEW SALEM COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORLD.



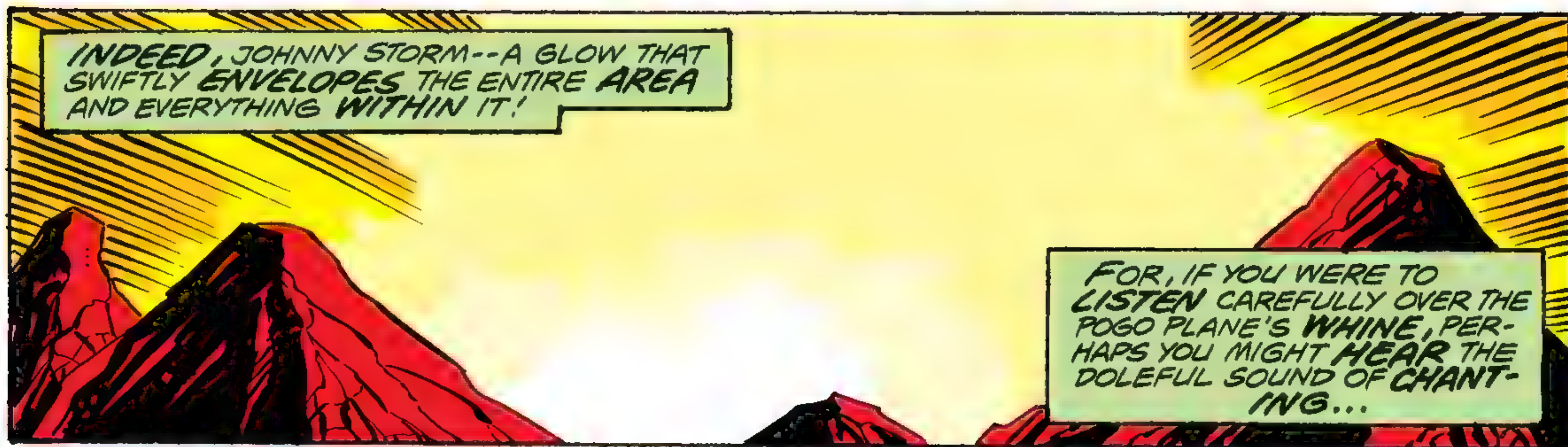
JUST THINK WHAT WE COULD LEARN, IF THEY WERE WILLING TO... HEY?!?

SOMETHING'S WRONG DOWN THERE! THE WHOLE CITY HAS STARTED TO -- GLOW!



INDEED, JOHNNY STORM--A GLOW THAT SWIFTLY ENVELOPES THE ENTIRE AREA AND EVERYTHING WITHIN IT!

FOR, IF YOU WERE TO LISTEN CAREFULLY OVER THE POGO PLANE'S WHINE, PERHAPS YOU MIGHT HEAR THE DOLEFUL SOUND OF CHANTING...



...AND THUS KNOW THAT THOSE OF NEW SALEM HAVE CONSIDERED HOW MUCH THEY MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD OF MORTAL MEN...

...AND CONSIDERED TOO WHAT MORTAL MEN MIGHT OFFER THEM IN TURN...

...AND THEY HAVE AT LAST DECIDED THAT THERE REALLY IS NO PLACE FOR THEM IN SUCH A WORLD AS THIS!

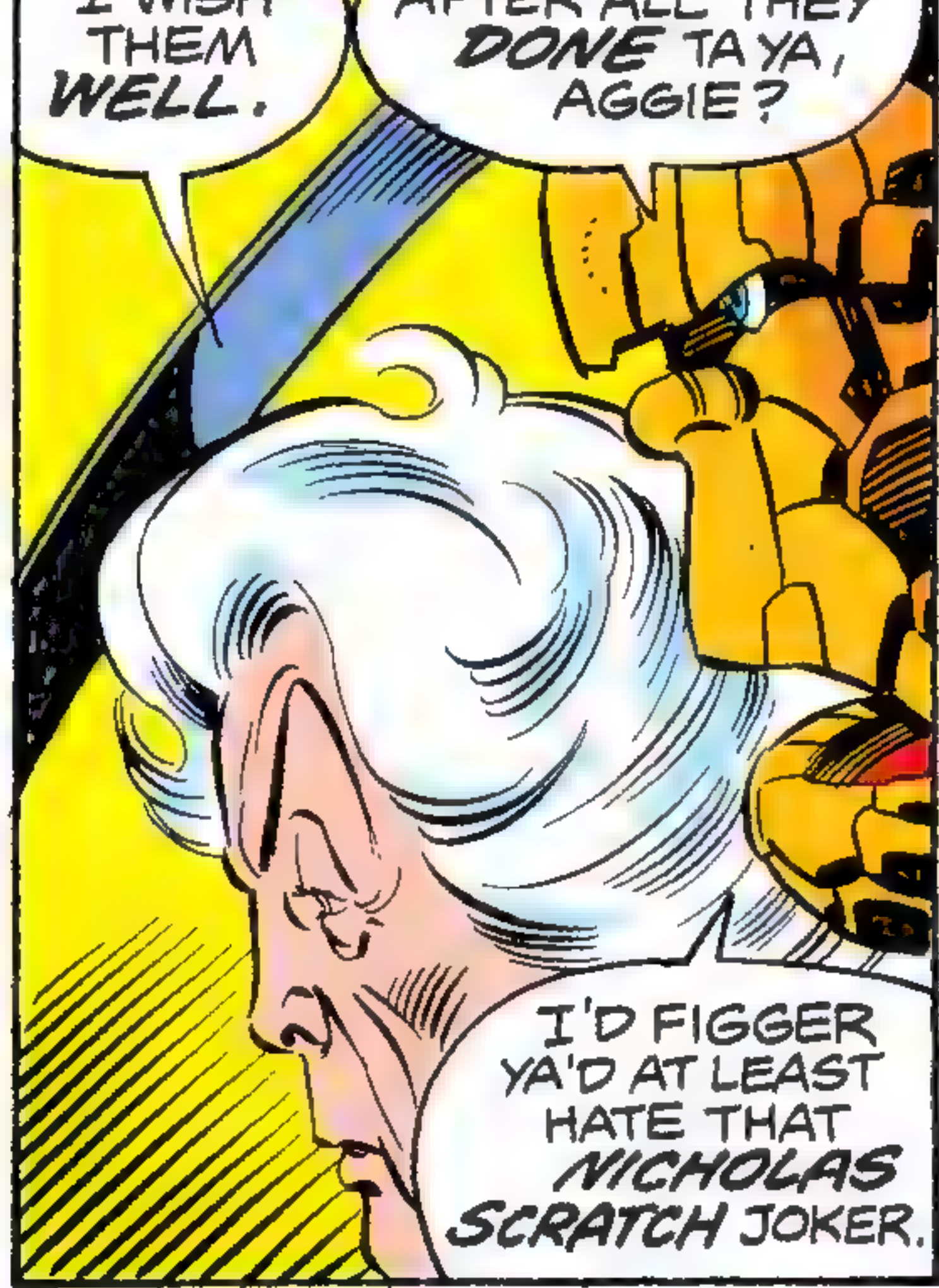


THEY ARE GONE--TO A BETTER PLACE, I HOPE... A PLACE WHERE THE MEMORIES CAN FINALLY BE HEALED.

I WISH THEM WELL.

EVEN AFTER ALL THEY DONE TAYYA, AGGIE?

I'D FIGGER YA'D AT LEAST HATE THAT NICHOLAS SCRATCH JOKER.



NO, BEN GRIMM--I BEAR NO MALICE FOR HIM, ONLY PITY.

AFTER ALL, HOW COULD A WOMAN HATE HER OWN SON?



NEXT ISSUE! IT'S BACK TO THE BAXTER BUILDING-- FOR A BATTLE WITH TWO OF THE MOST UN-EXPECTED SUPER-FOES OF ALL! BE HERE FOR...

TROUBLE TIMES TWO!

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

30¢
©

187
OCT
02462

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP

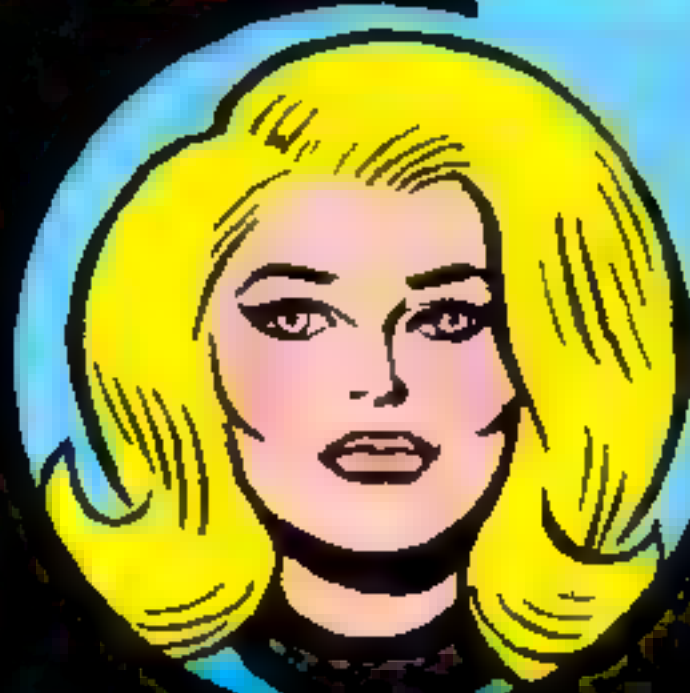
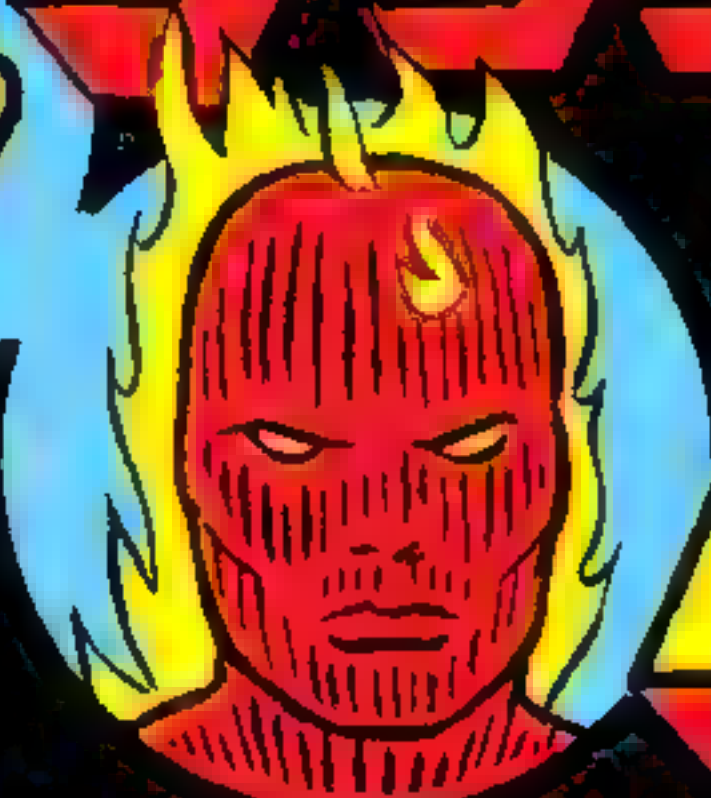


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



TM



TM

EVEN IF
YOU HAD A
CHANCE
OF BEATING
KLAW...

-- YOU'RE **NEVER**
GONNA BEAT MY
BRAND-NEW
PARTNER!

NO--NOT
HIM! IT
CAN'T BE--
HIM!

PEREZ: COCKRUM

**TROUBLE
TIMES TWO!**

A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human!

MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

LEN WEIN: WRITER/EDITOR * GEORGE PÉREZ & JOE SINNOTT: ILLUSTRATORS * GLYNIS WEIN: COLORIST
JOE ROSEN: LETTERER

TROUBLE TIMES TWO!

REDOUBTABLE RECAP DEPT: LAST ISH, THE FF RESCUED YOUNG FRANKLIN RICHARDS AND HIS GOVERNESS AGATHA HARKNESS FROM THE SUPERNATURAL CITIZENRY OF NEW SALEM, COLORADO-- AND NOW THEY'RE HEADING HOME!

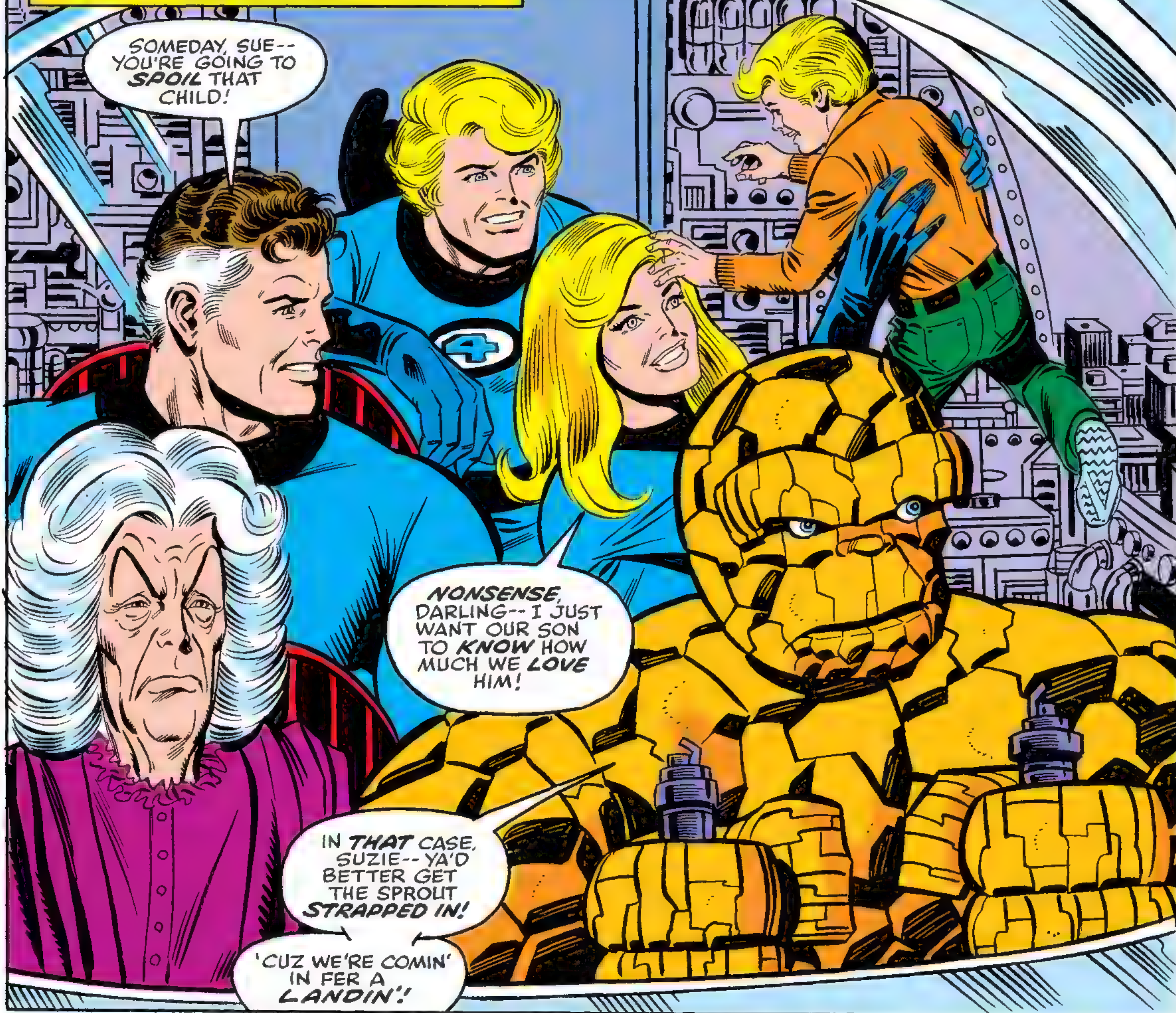
HMMMMMM...YEAH, THAT'S ABOUT ALL YOU NEED TO *KNOW*, FRANTIC ONE. FROM HERE ON IN, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

SOMEDAY, SUE-- YOU'RE GOING TO *SPOIL* THAT CHILD!

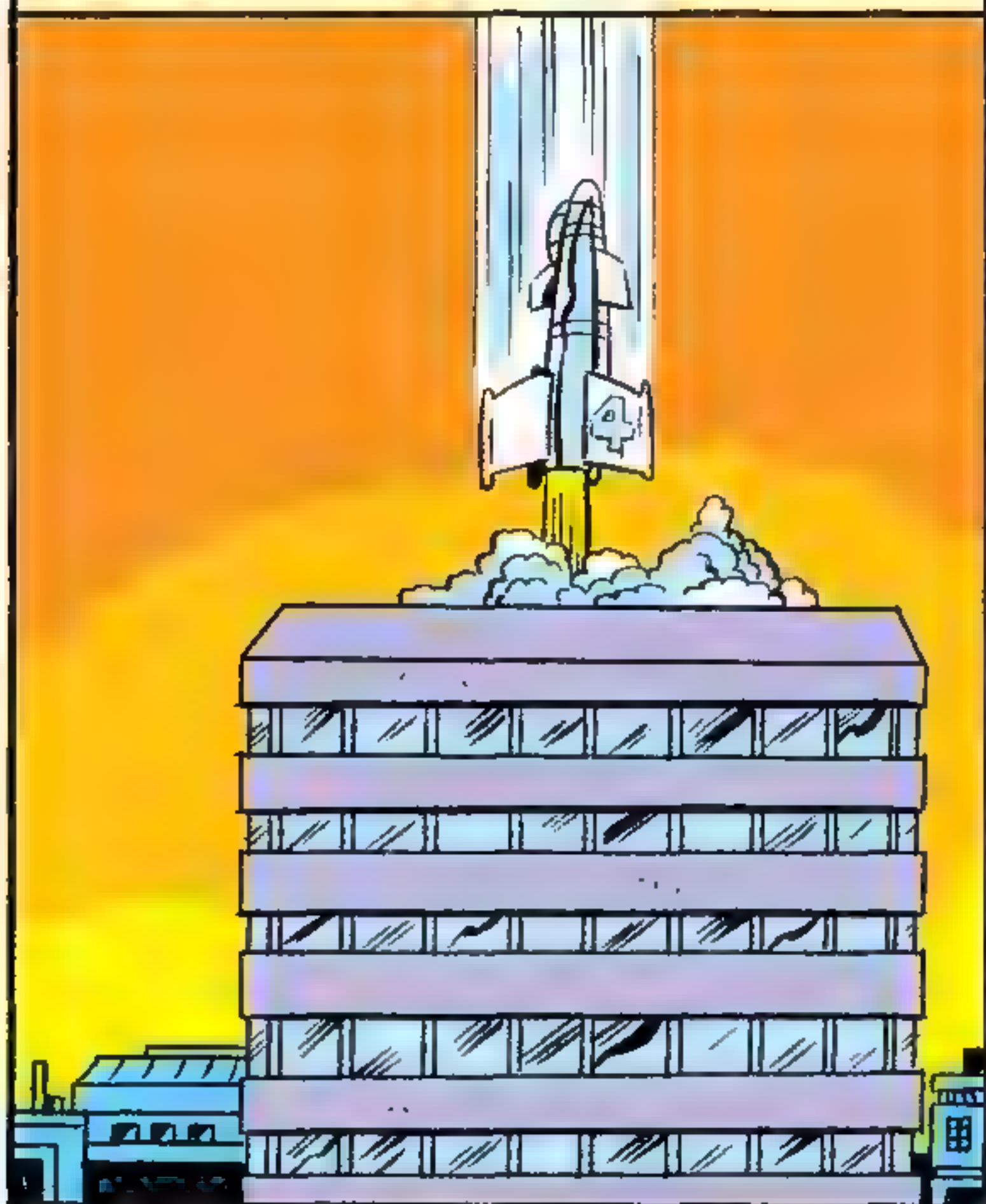
NONSENSE, DARLING-- I JUST WANT OUR SON TO *KNOW* HOW MUCH WE LOVE HIM!

IN *THAT* CASE, SUZIE-- YA'D BETTER GET THE SPROUT *STRAPPED* IN!

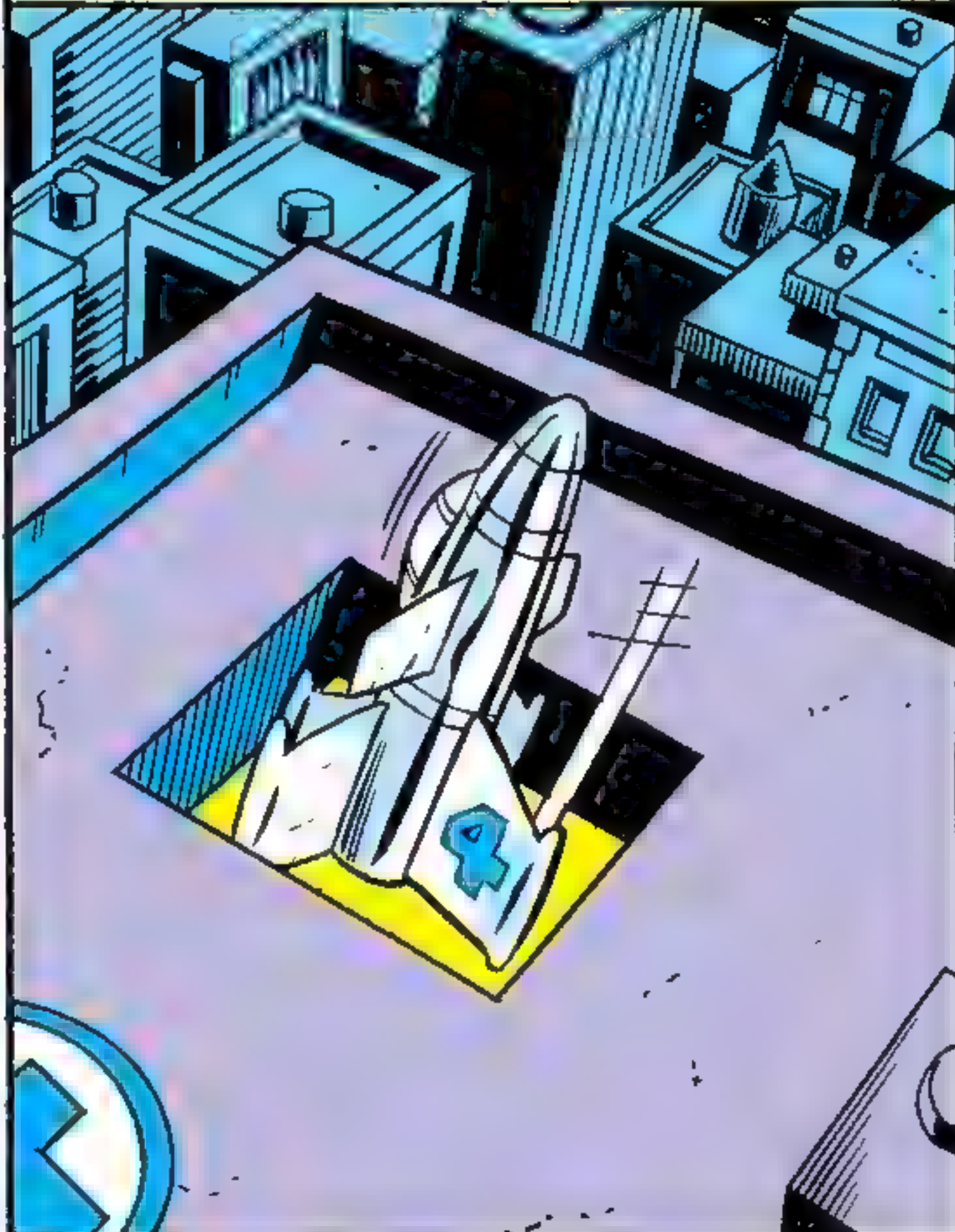
'CUZ WE'RE COMIN' IN FER A *LANDIN'*!



WITH BEN GRIMM'S EXPERIENCED HAND AT THE CONTROLS, THE POWERFUL POGO PLANE SETTLES FEATHER-LIGHT TO THE ROOF OF THE FAMOUS BAXTER BUILDING--



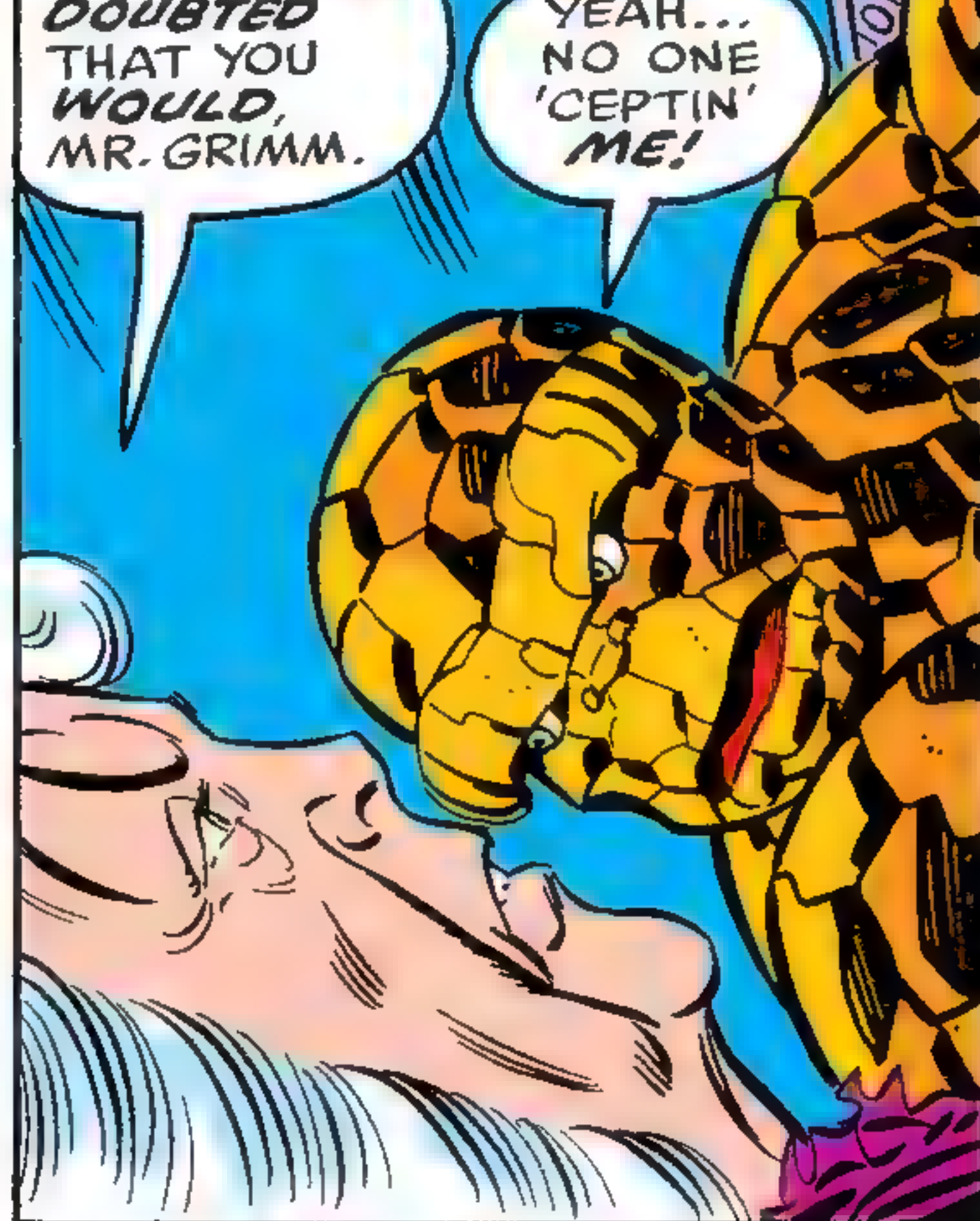
--WHERE, AT A PRECOMPUTED SIGNAL, A SPECIALLY-DESIGNED HYDRAULIC PLATFORM LOWERS THE SKYCRAFT TO ITS WAITING BERTH...



OKAY, GANG-- YA CAN STOP HOLDIN' YER BREATH NOW. I BRUNG US BACK ALIVE!

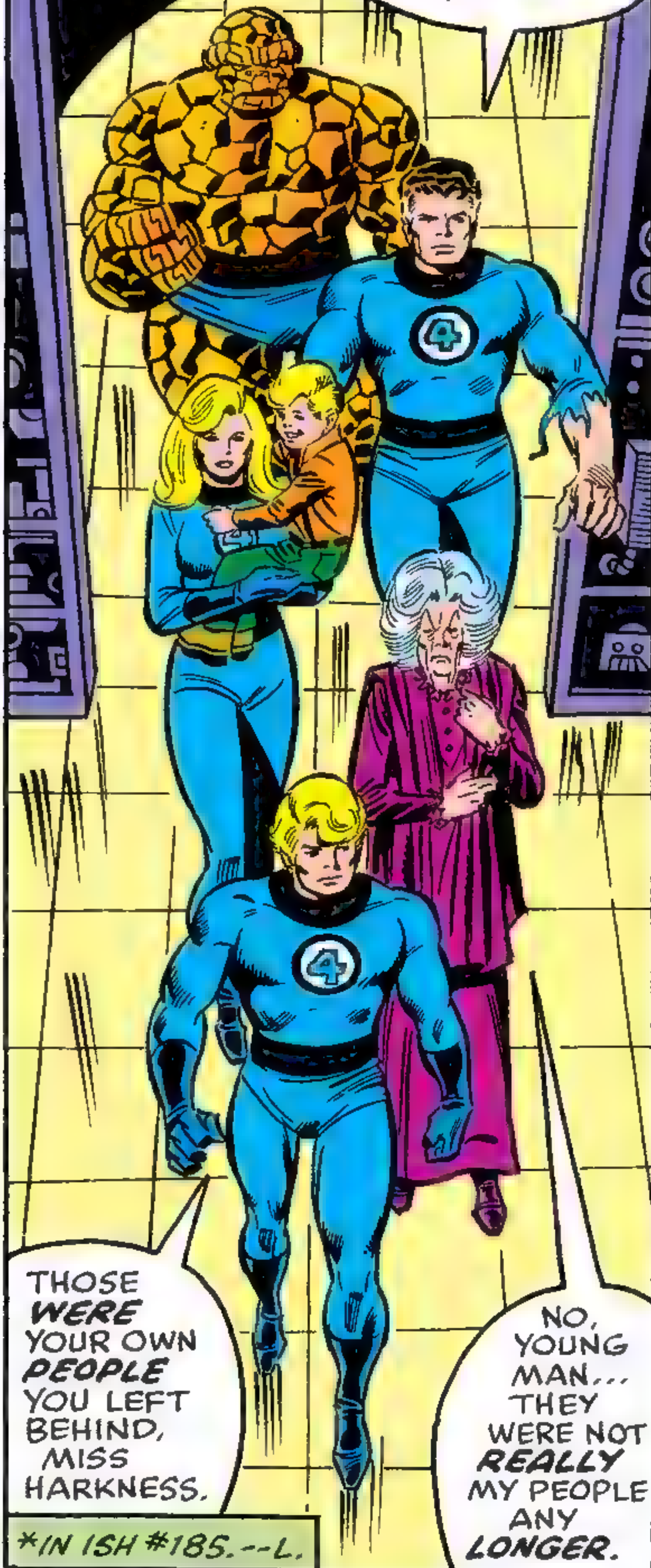
NO ONE EVER DOUBTED THAT YOU WOULD, MR. GRIMM.

YEAH... NO ONE 'CEPTIN' ME!



I DON'T KNOW 'BOUT THE REST 'A YA, BUT I'M STILL KIND'A SHOOK UP FROM HAVIN' MY OWN POWER TURNED AGAINST ME BACK IN NEW SALEM! *

SPEAKING OF NEW SALEM, ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN COMING WITH US, AGATHA?



THOSE WERE YOUR OWN PEOPLE YOU LEFT BEHIND, MISS HARKNESS.

NO, YOUNG MAN... THEY WERE NOT REALLY MY PEOPLE ANY LONGER.

*IN ISH #185.--L.

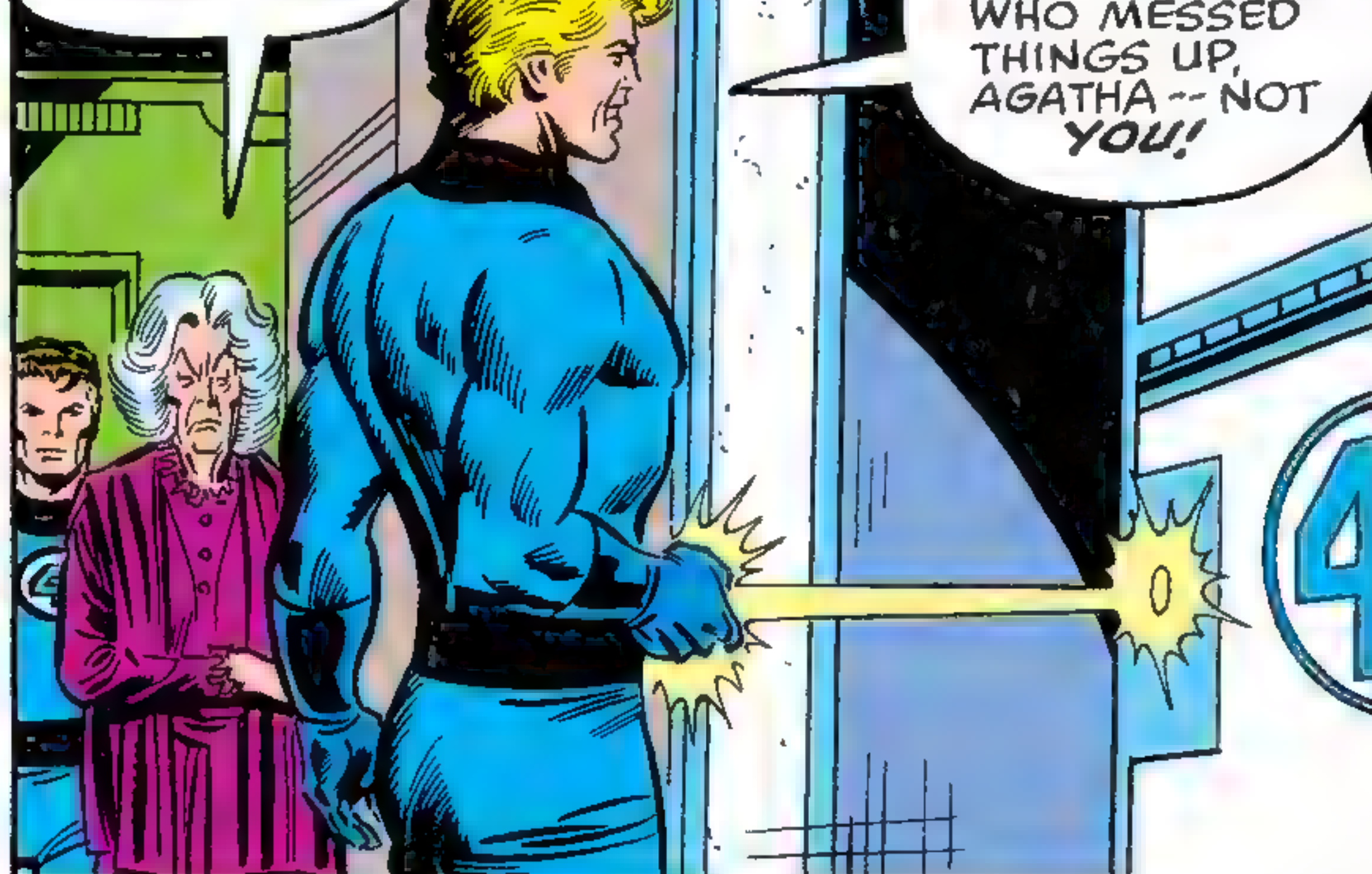
A SOCIETY THAT HIDES ITSELF-- AND DOES NOT TASTE WHAT THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER-- CANNOT HOPE TO GROW...



...AND THUS, IS DOOMED TO DIE!

THAT IS WHY I FIRST LEFT NEW SALEM-- IN THE HOPE THAT I MIGHT SOMEDAY DRAW MY PEOPLE OUT AMONG OTHER MEN ONCE MORE...

...BUT I'M AFRAID, IN THE END, I FAILED THEM.



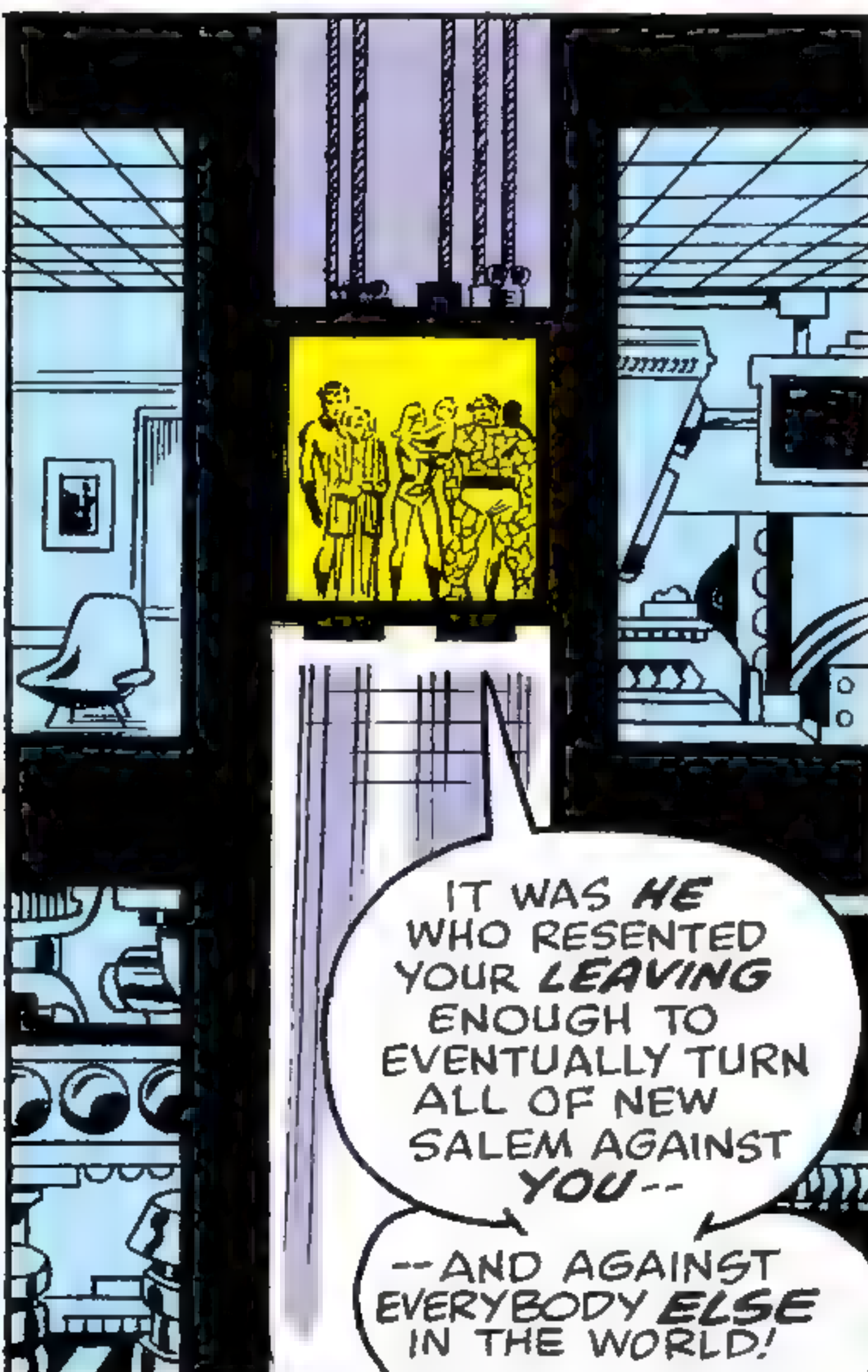
SEEMS TO ME, IT WAS YOUR SON WHO MESSED THINGS UP, AGATHA-- NOT YOU!

BUT PERHAPS, JOHNNY STORM, IF I'D BROUGHT POOR NICHOLAS UP DIFFERENTLY-- IF I'D FILLED HIS HEART WITH SO MUCH LOVE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ROOM FOR HATE, HE MIGHT YET BE ALIVE! *

NO, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE BLAME IS STILL SOLELY MINE!



*NICHOLAS SCRATCH WENT TO HIS REWARD LAST ISSUE, -- LEN.



IT WAS HE WHO RESENTED YOUR LEAVING ENOUGH TO EVENTUALLY TURN ALL OF NEW SALEM AGAINST YOU--

--AND AGAINST EVERYBODY ELSE IN THE WORLD!

YOU'RE BEING TOO **HARD** ON YOURSELF, AGATHA. THE PAST IS **DEAD**--THERE'S NOTHING **ANYONE** CAN DO TO **CHANGE** IT!

FOR YOUR OWN **SAKE**, YOU MUST LEARN TO LIVE FOR THE **FUTURE**.

I SHALL **TRY**, MR. RICHARDS... I SHALL MOST **SINCERELY TRY**.

WELL, WHILE YER **TRYIN'** LADY-- I'M GONNA CURL UP WITH A GOOD **STOGIE**...

...AN' WATCH ME SOME **CELEBRITY WRESTLIN'**!

AFTER ALL WE'VE JUST **BEEN** THRU, BEN-- HOW CAN YOU WATCH **MORE FIGHTING**?

LISSEN, MATCHSTICK, I GOT ME SOME **RELAXATION** COMIN'--AN' IF YA DON'T LIKE IT, YA CAN **STUFF** IT IN YER...

HOLY COW!!

SHEESH! WHA' **HAPPENED** TO THIS PLACE? LOOKS LIKE A BUNCH'A **YANCY STREETERS** HAVE BEEN **REDECORATIN'** IT!

THE **JERNT** IS A **SHAMBLES**--AND THE **DADBLAMED IMPOSSIBLE MAN** HAS HIS POINTY LITTLE **HEAD** STUCK RIGHT THROUGH MY BEST **COLOR TV**!

HEY, DON'T EVER LET 'IM KNOW I **ASKED**, STRETCH-- BUT IS THE LITTLE PAIN **OKAY**?

HE'S **UNCONSCIOUS**, BEN-- BUT APPARENTLY **UNHARMED**!

WHO IN **BLAZES** COULD'VE **DONE** THIS TO HIM, REED?

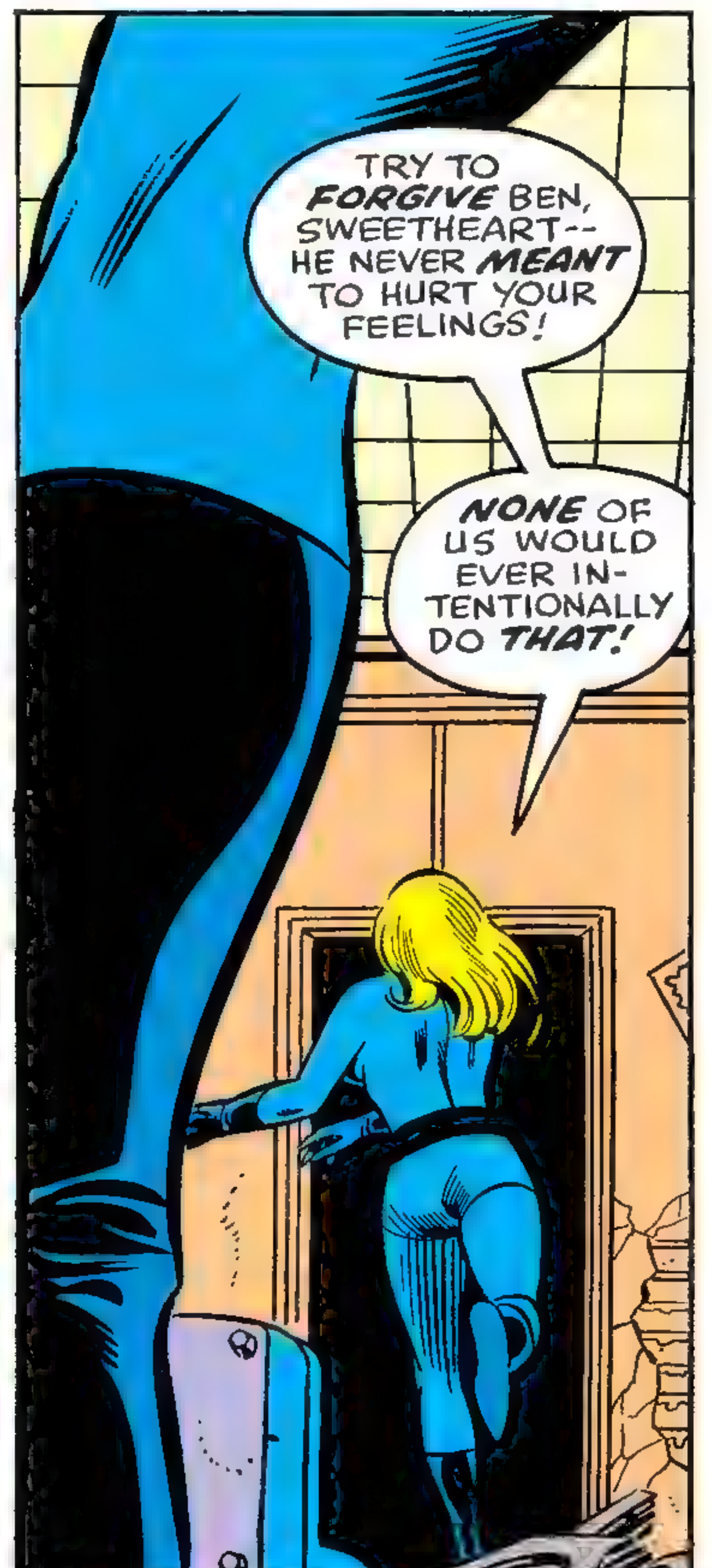
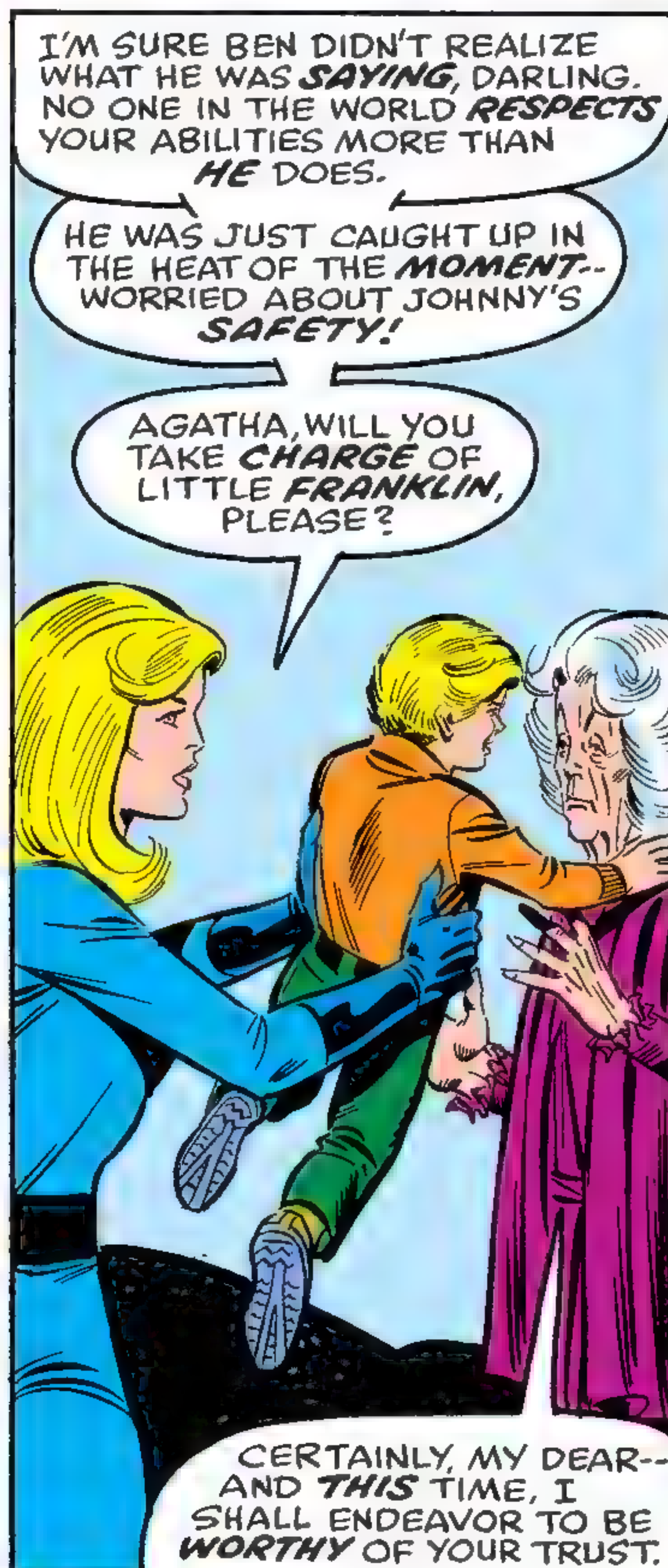
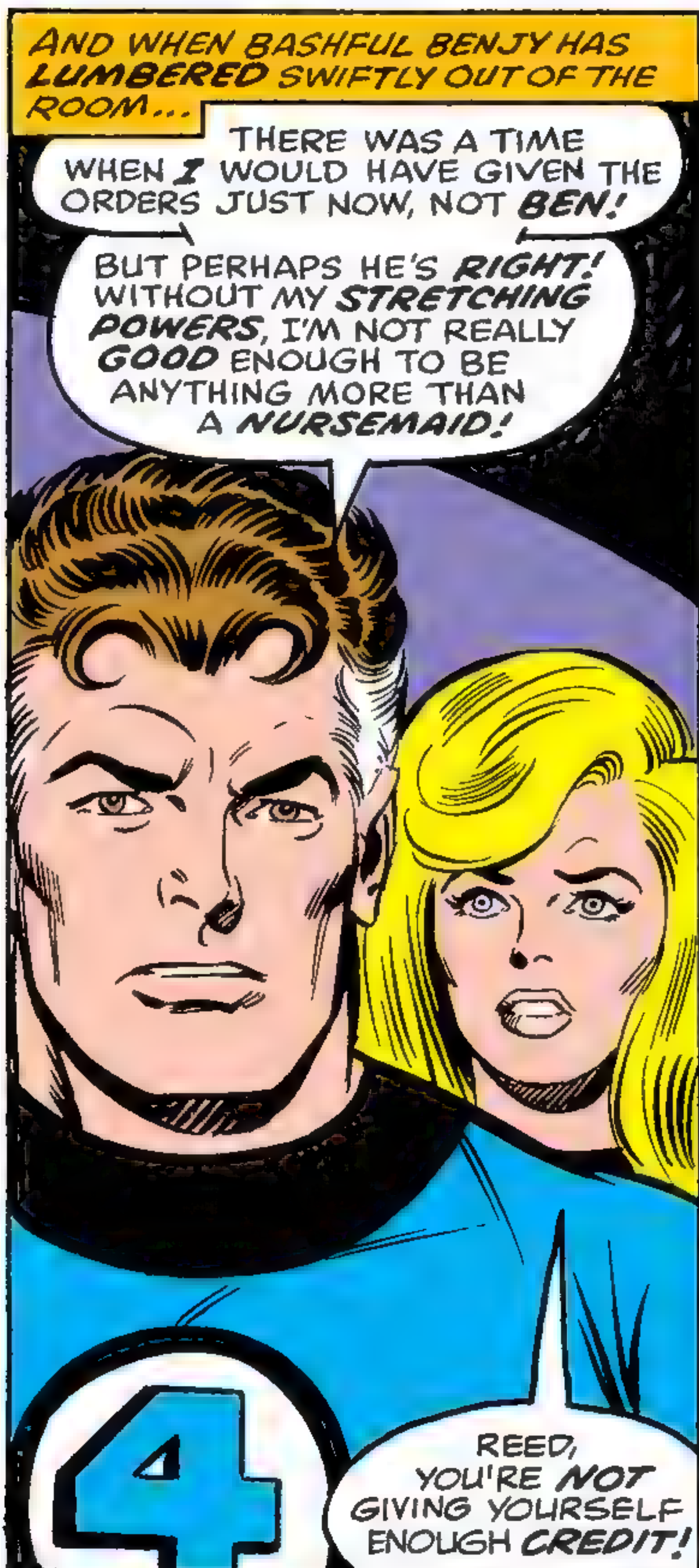
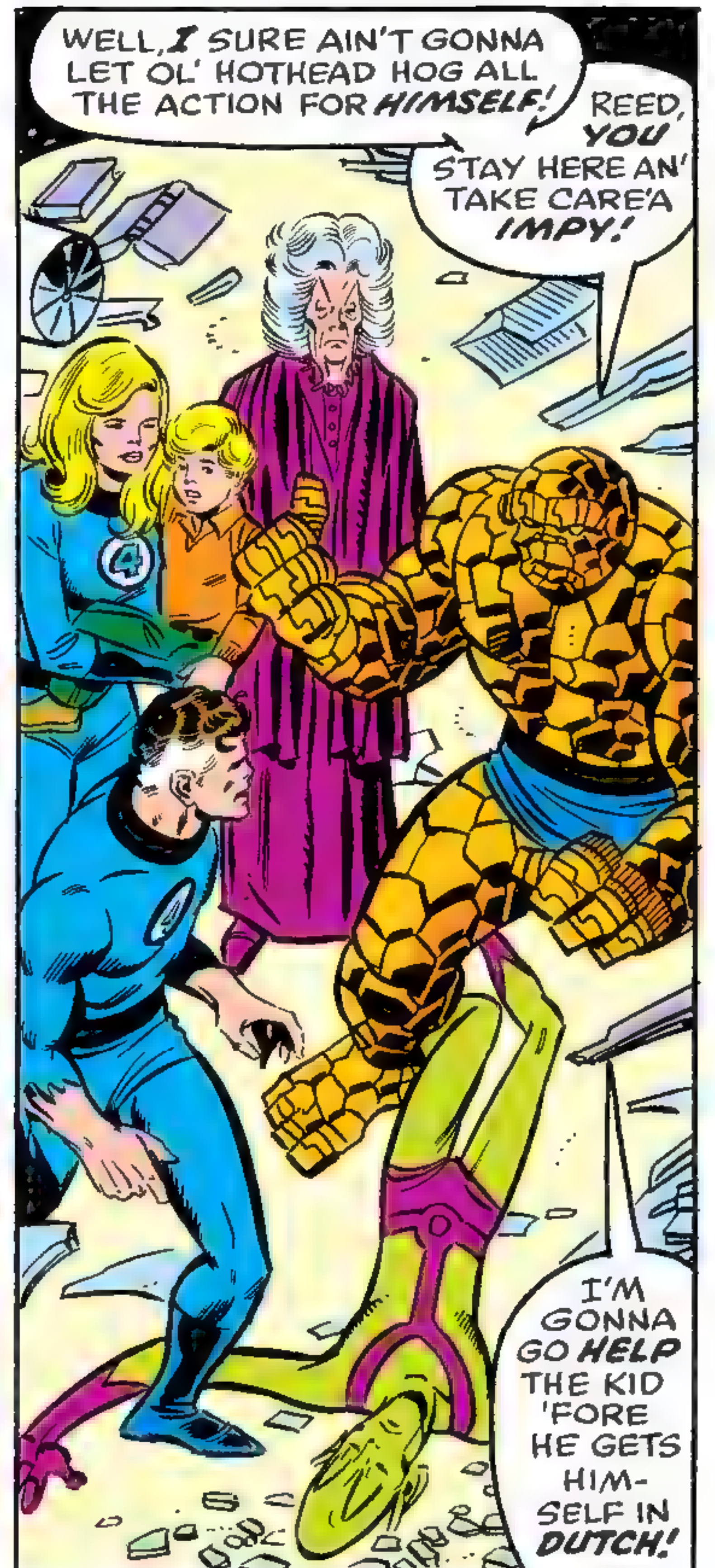
THAT, JOHNNY BOY, IS A **DISTRESSINGLY GOOD QUESTION**!

Y'KNOW, OL' **IMPY** AIN'T NEVER LOOKED **BETTER**! FIRST TIME I CAN REMEMBER SEEIN' HIM WITH HIS **MOUTH** SHUT!

WHAT CONCERNS **ME** IS THAT WHOEVER IS **RESPONSIBLE** FOR THIS MAY STILL BE IN THE **BUILDING**!

BUT HOW COULD ANY-ONE HAVE GOTTEN PAST OUR **INTRUDER ALARMS**?

WHAT COULD THEY BE **AFTER**?



IT NEVER OCCURS TO SUSAN RICHARDS THAT HER HEARTSICK HUSBAND MIGHT NOT FOLLOW HER TO AID IN THE SEARCH--

--AND, BY THE TIME SHE REALIZES THAT REED HAS INDEED STAYED BEHIND, IT IS FAR TOO LATE FOR HER TO TURN BACK FOR HIM...

...NOT THAT IT WOULD REALLY MATTER IF SHE DID!

WHILE, OUTSIDE...

I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE RUN OFF LIKE THAT!

IT SURE COULDN'T HAVE HELPED BOLSTER REED'S CONFIDENCE ANY!

BUT IF THERE IS SOMEONE INSIDE THE BAXTER BUILDING, THERE WAS NO TIME TO WASTE!

TROUBLE IS-- SO FAR, MY SEARCH HAS BEEN A BUST!

LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE OTHERS WILL HAVE TO FIND OUR INTRUDER!

AND IF THAT ISN'T A CUE...

THIS IS THE THIRD FLOOR I'VE CHECKED SO FAR AN' COME UP EMPTY! MEBBE I SHOULD JUST...

HUH? THAT HUMMIN'-- COMIN' FROM REED'S ELECTRO-LAB--!

THERE'S SOMEBODY IN HERE!

INDEED THERE IS, YOU GROTESQUE GARGOYLE...

... AND THAT "SOMEBODY" IS **KLAW**-- THE MURDEROUS MASTER OF SOUND!!

I REMEMBER, BEETLE-BRAIN--THOUGH I BEEN TRYIN' MY BEST TA FERGET YA!

YOU SURE AIN'T GOTTEN ANY PRETTIER SINCE THE LAST TIME WE TANGLED! *

*BACK IN FF#119. -- LEN.



HOW **UNFORTUNATE** GRIMM WAS UNABLE TO **COMPLETE** HIS SENTENCE!

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST **APPROPRIATE** FOR HIS FINAL WORDS TO BE THE **NAME** OF THE ONE WHO **DESTROYED** HIM--

BUT IF THE MISERABLE **THING** HAS FOUND US, MY FRIEND-- HIS **COMPANIONS** CANNOT BE FAR **BEHIND**!

EVERY MOMENT IS NOW **PRECIOUS**-- AND WE MUST MOVE **SWIFTLY** IF WE ARE TO **COMPLETE** OUR WORK IN **TIME**!

--THE NAME OF THE ALL-POWERFUL **MOLECULE MAN**!

MEANWHILE---



THANK YOU FOR PUTTING THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN AND MY SON TO **BED**, AGATHA.

THE WAY I'M **FEELING** AT THE MOMENT, I PROBABLY COULDN'T EVEN HAVE DONE **THAT** RIGHT.

YOU CHASTISE YOURSELF **NEEDLESSLY**, MR. RICHARDS.



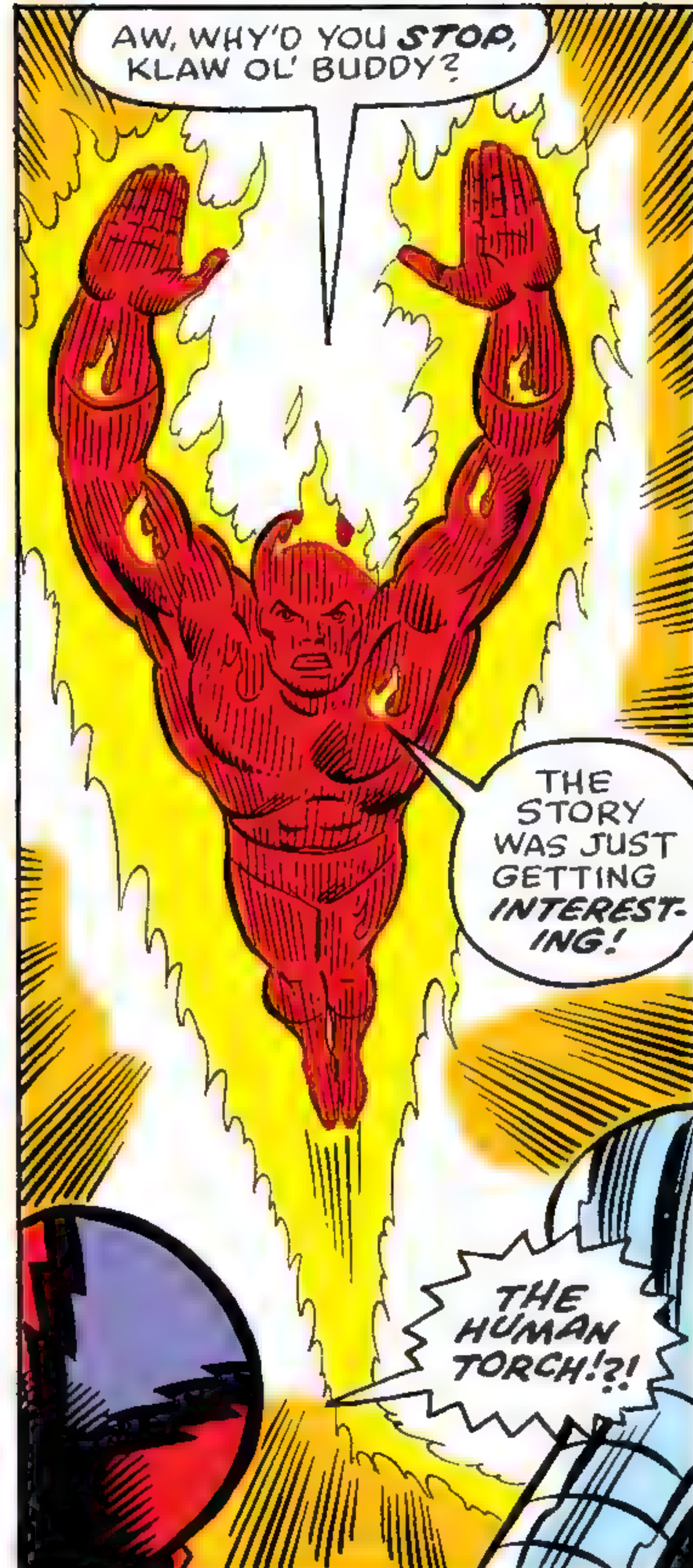
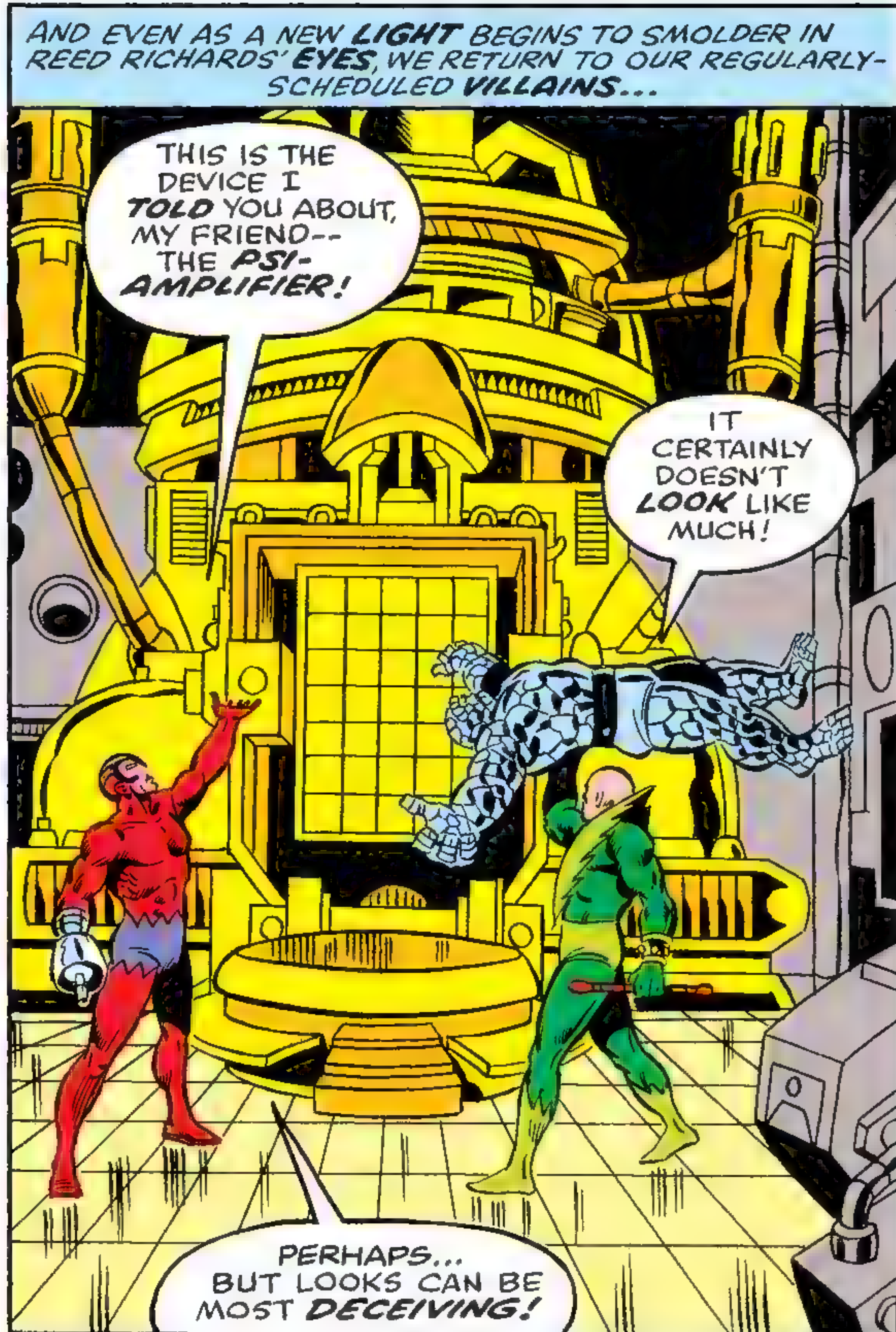
A MAN IS NOT MEASURED BY HIS **PHYSICAL** LIMITATIONS, BUT BY THE LIMITS OF HIS **MIND**!

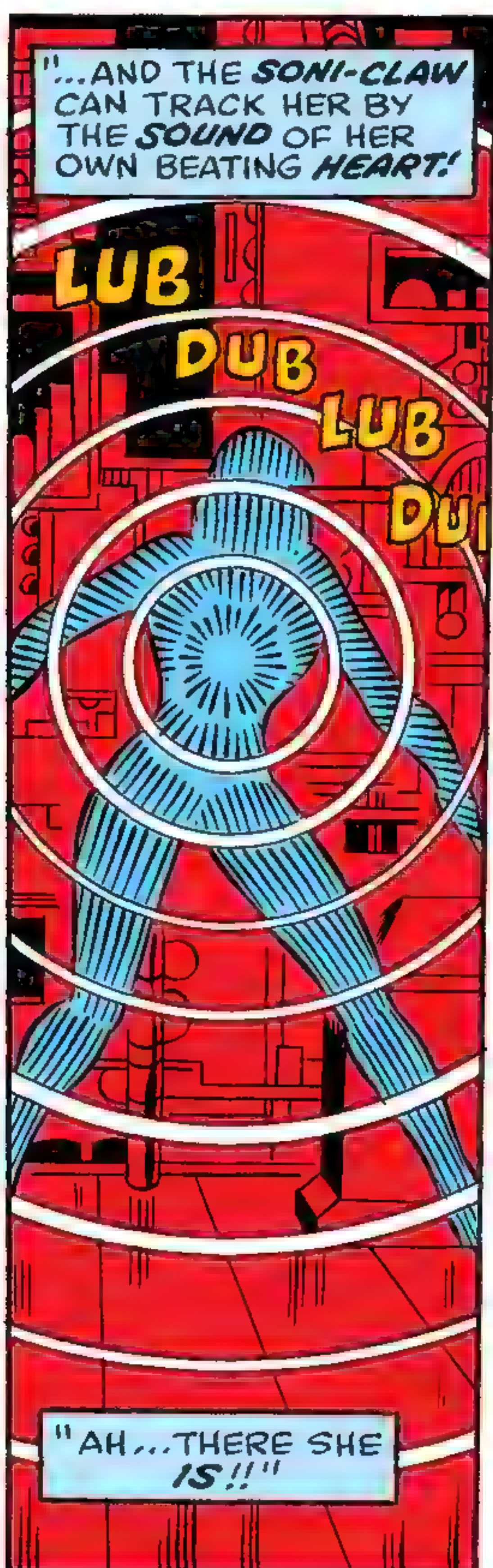
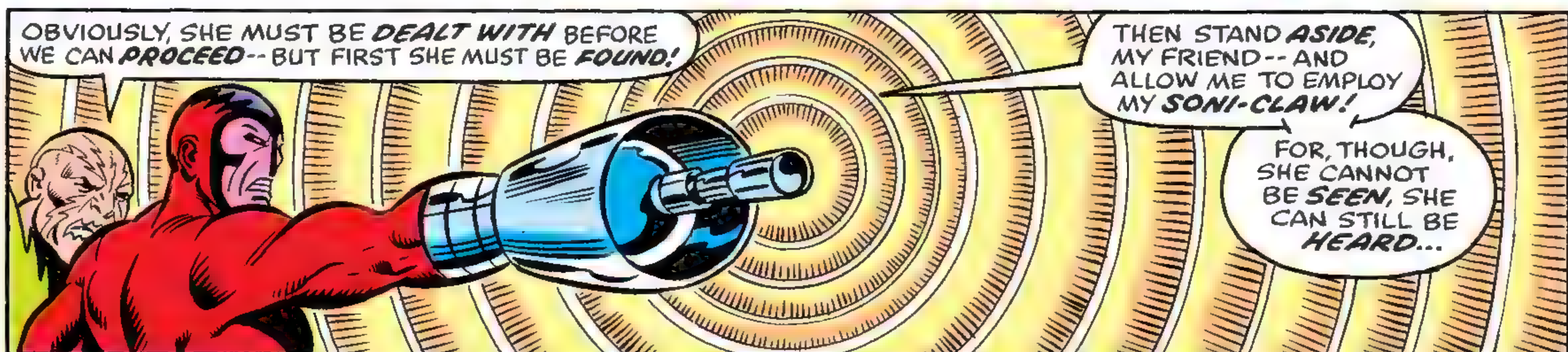
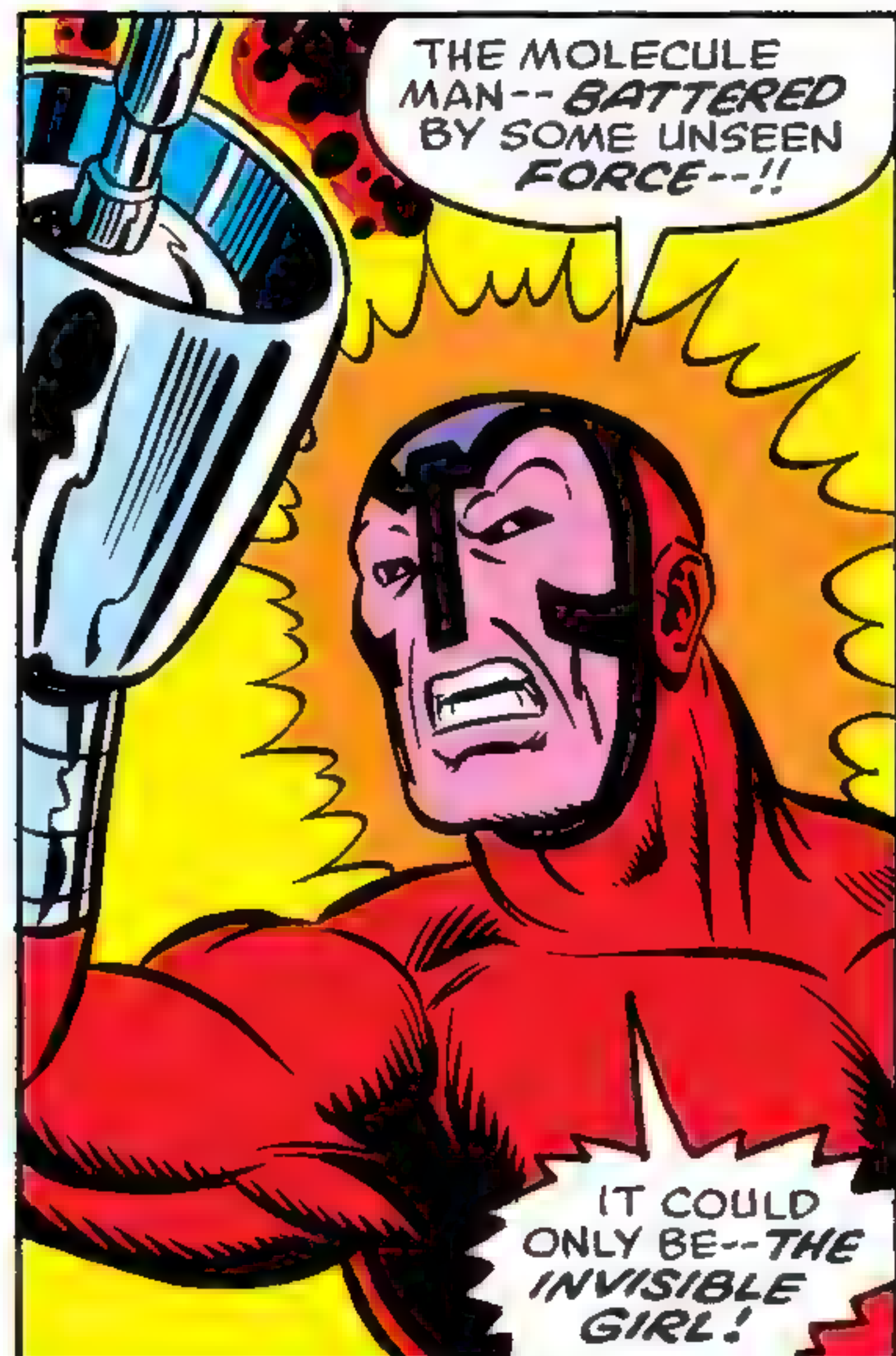
WHEN YOU LOST YOUR ABILITY TO **STRETCH**, DID YOU ALSO LOSE YOUR CAPACITY TO **THINK**?

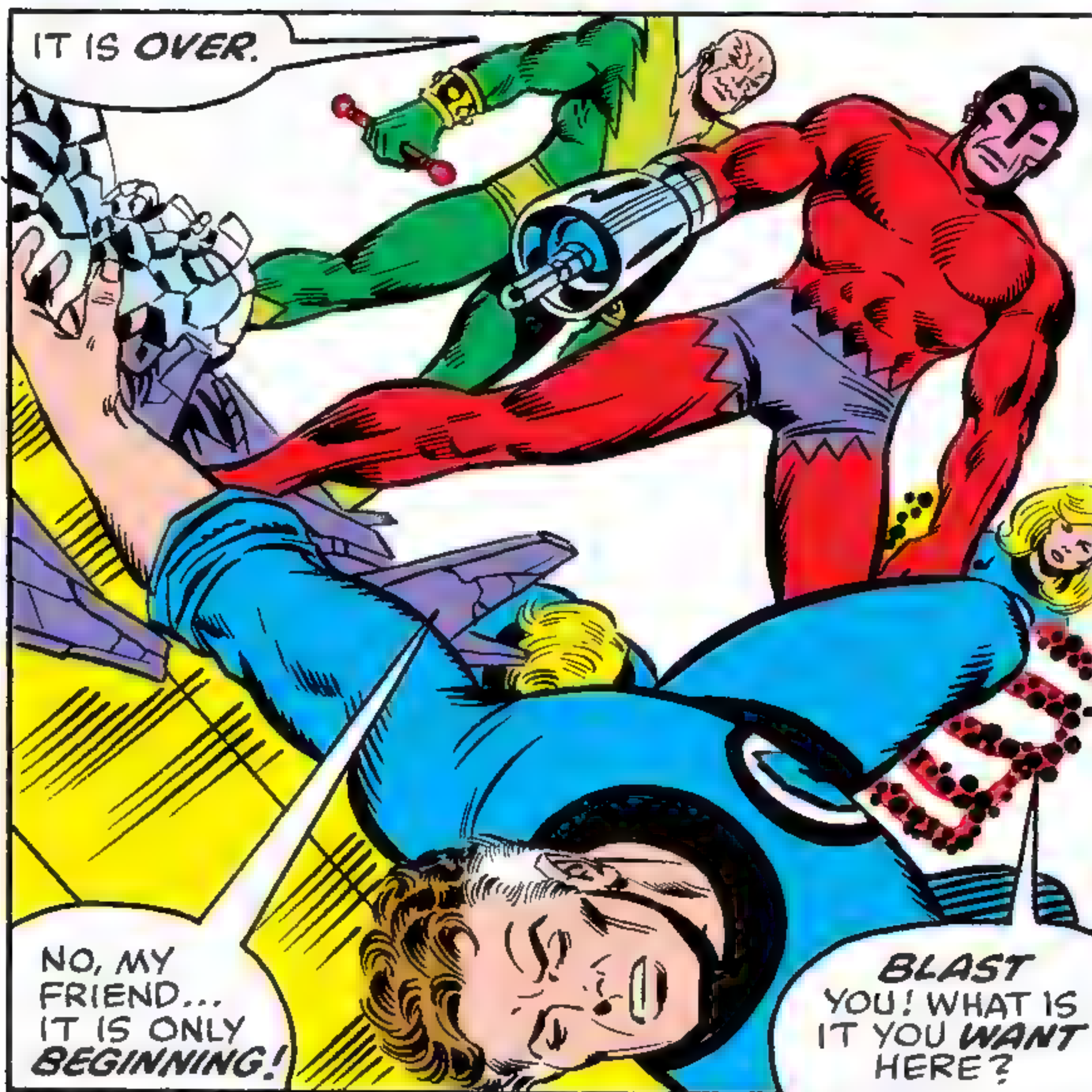
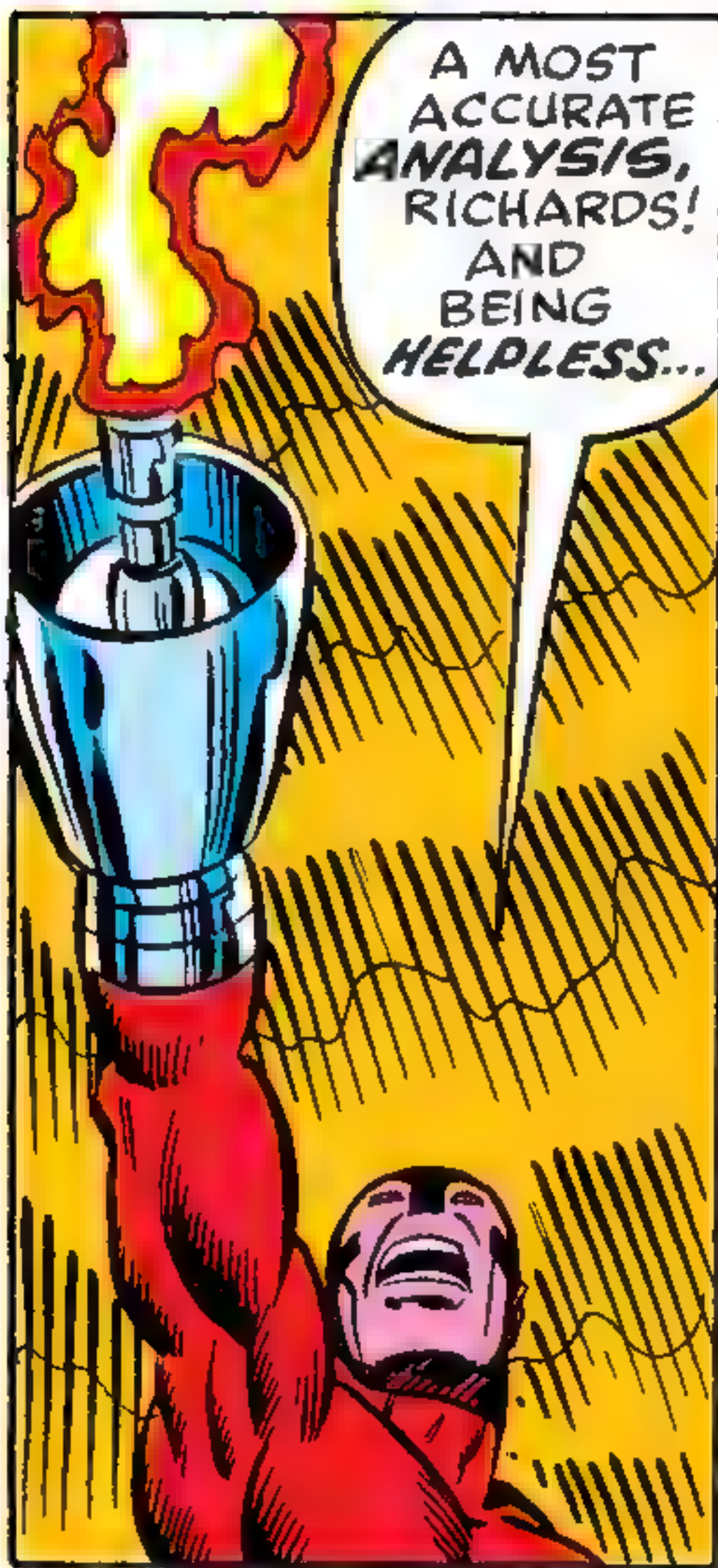
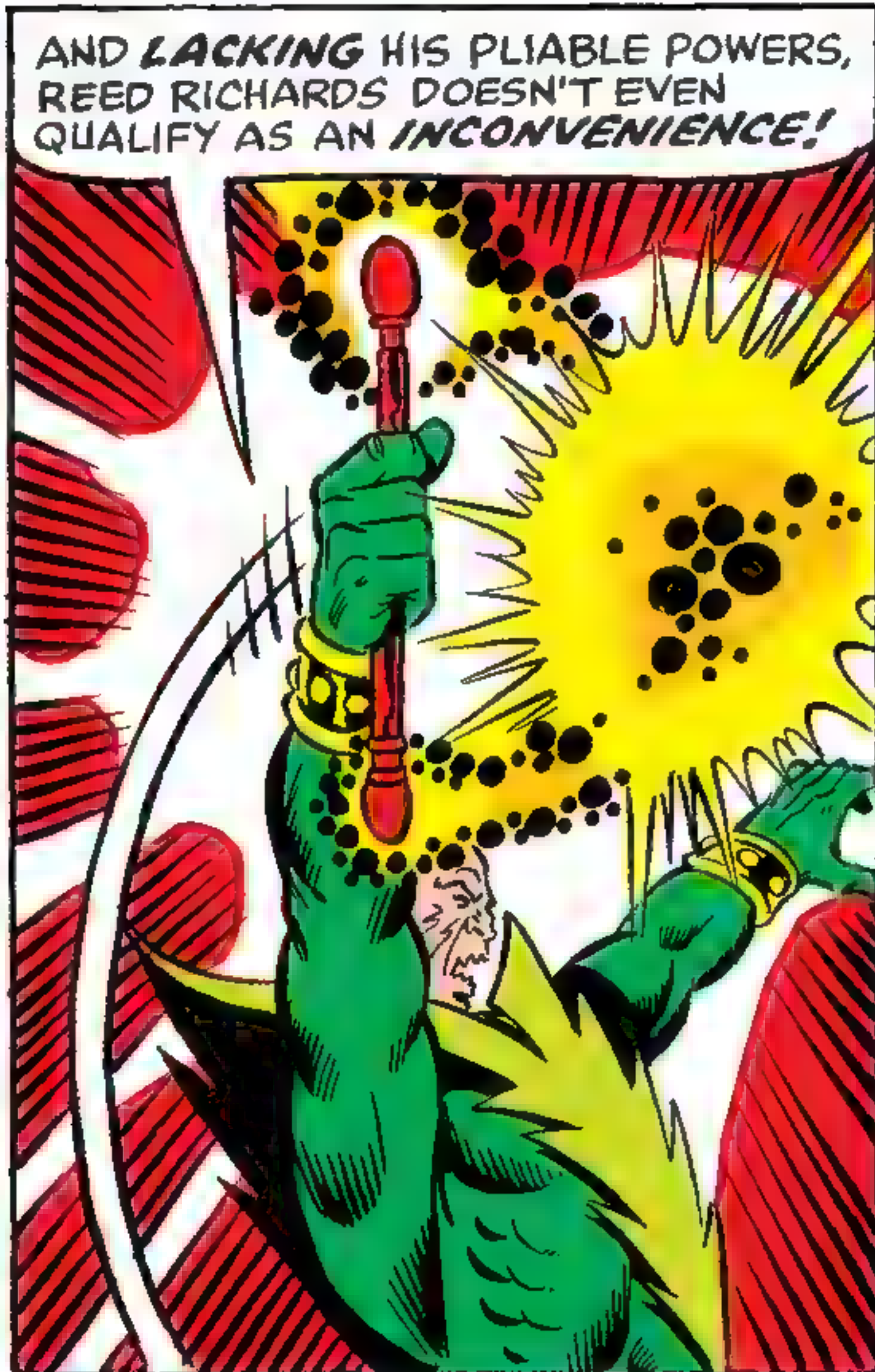
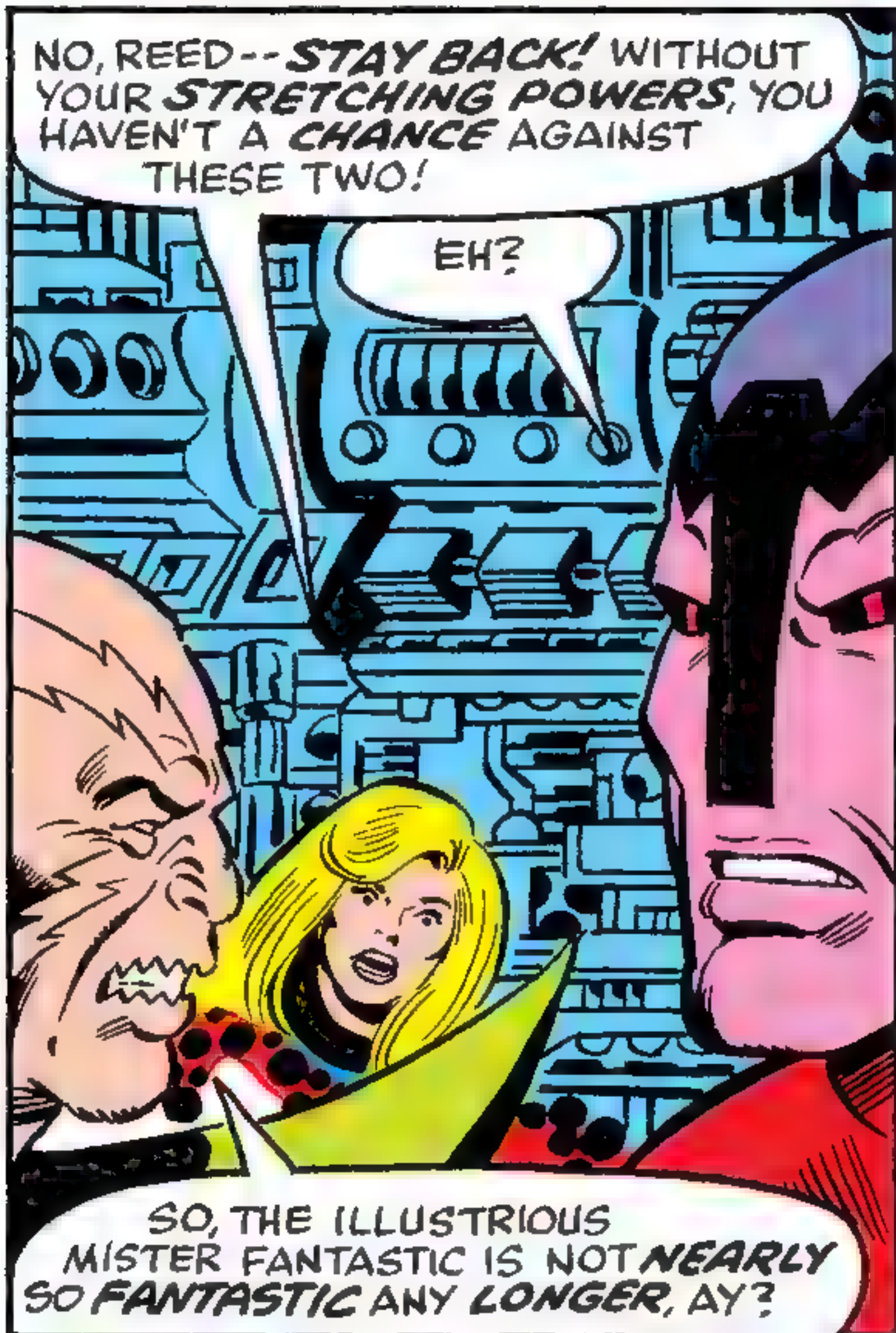
NO... I SUPPOSE **NOT**.



THEN, BY THE STARS, WHY AREN'T YOU PUTTING YOUR BRAIN TO **USE**??





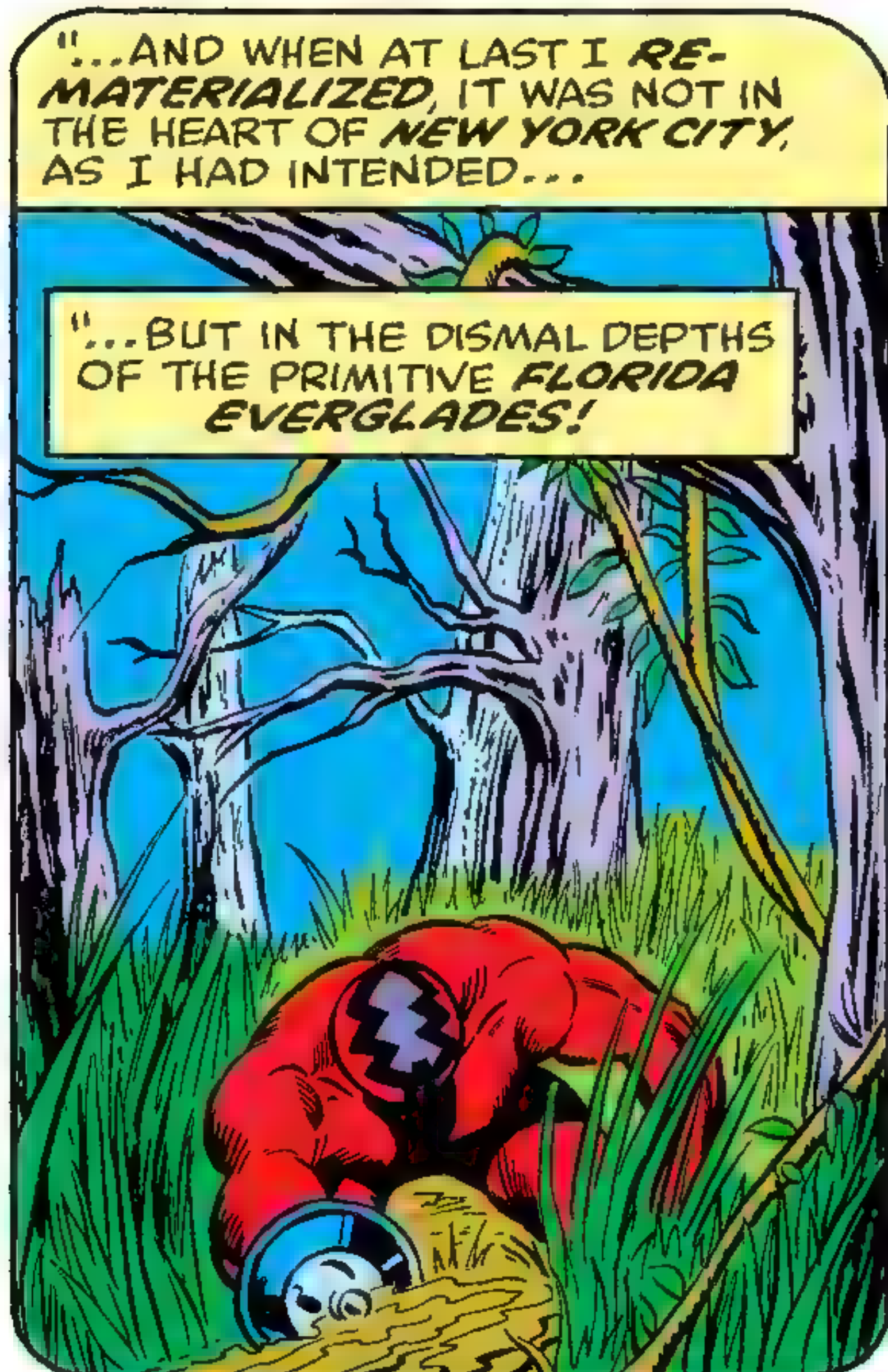




"IT BEGINS, YOU SEE, WITH MY **ESCAPE** FROM AN **ALIEN DI-MENSION!**✱

"A MALFUNCTION IN THE **SHUTTLE-CHAMBER** SENT ME HURLING WILDLY THRU THE **VOID** BETWEEN WORLDS...

*AS DETAILED IN ISSUE #20 OF THE LATE, LAMENTED **KA-ZAR** MAG. -- LEN,



"...AND WHEN AT LAST I **RE-MATERIALIZED**, IT WAS NOT IN THE HEART OF **NEW YORK CITY**, AS I HAD INTENDED...

"...BUT IN THE DISMAL DEPTHS OF THE PRIMITIVE **FLORIDA EVERGLADES!**



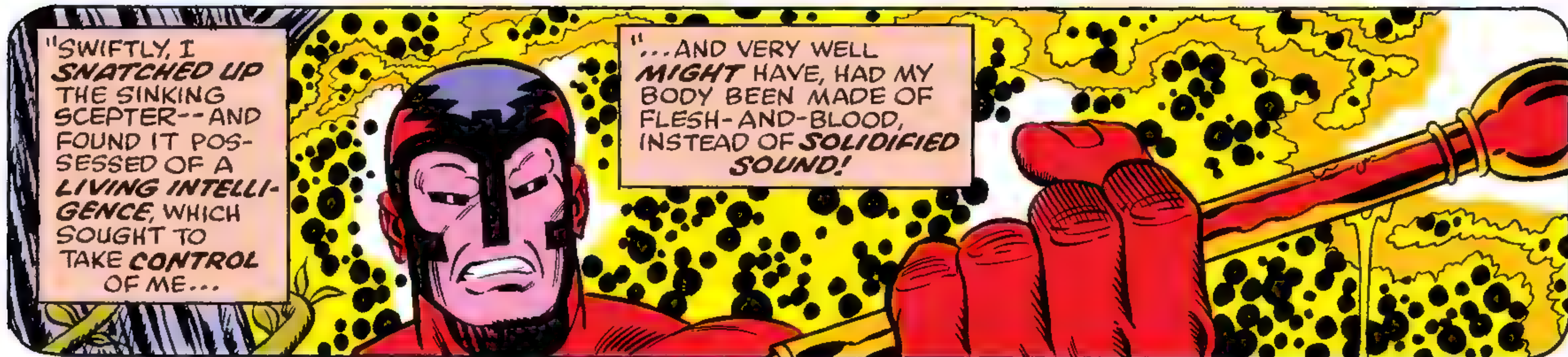
"A HEAVY **SHUFFLING** SOUND ATTRACTED MY **ATTENTION**, AND I TURNED TO SEE THE MISSHAPEN **MAN-THING** SHAMBLING BY...

"...A GLOWING CRIMSON **WAND** CLENCHED TIGHTLY IN HIS CLAW-LIKE **HAND!**



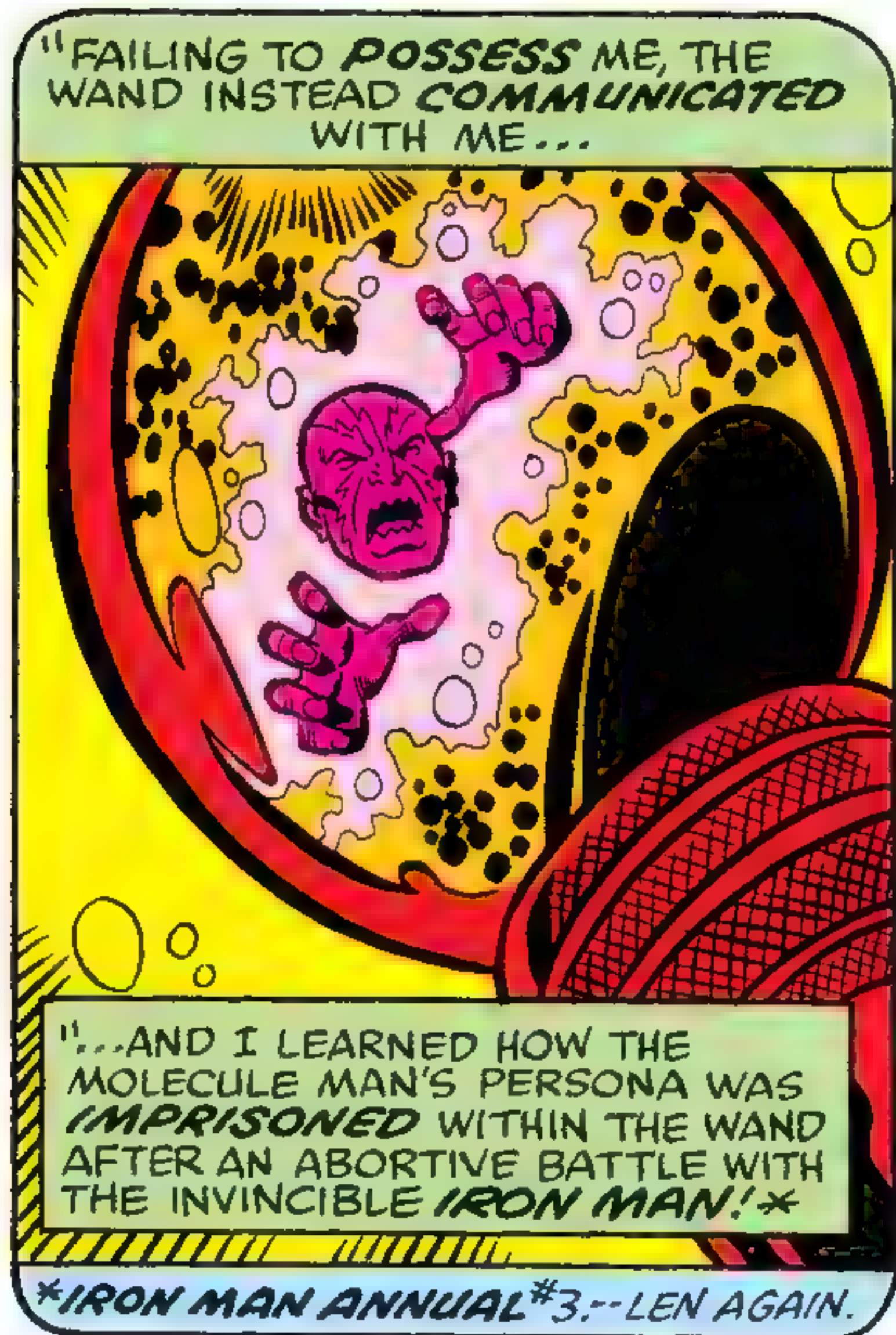
"MY CURIOSITY **PIQUED**, I FOLLOWED THE MINDLESS MURK-DWELLER UNTIL HE **DROPPED** THE PULSATING WAND INTO THE **MIRE...**

"...AS IF HE'D **FORGOTTEN** HE HAD EVER BEEN **HOLDING** IT!



"SWIFTLY, I **SNATCHED UP** THE SINKING SCEPTER--AND FOUND IT POSSESSED OF A **LIVING INTELLIGENCE**, WHICH SOUGHT TO TAKE **CONTROL** OF ME...

"...AND VERY WELL **MIGHT** HAVE, HAD MY BODY BEEN MADE OF FLESH-AND-BLOOD, INSTEAD OF **SOLIDIFIED SOUND!**



"FAILING TO **POSSESS** ME, THE WAND INSTEAD **COMMUNICATED** WITH ME...

"...AND I LEARNED HOW THE MOLECULE MAN'S PERSONA WAS **IMPRISONED** WITHIN THE WAND AFTER AN ABORTIVE BATTLE WITH THE INVINCIBLE **IRON MAN!**✱

*IRON MAN ANNUAL #3.-- LEN AGAIN.



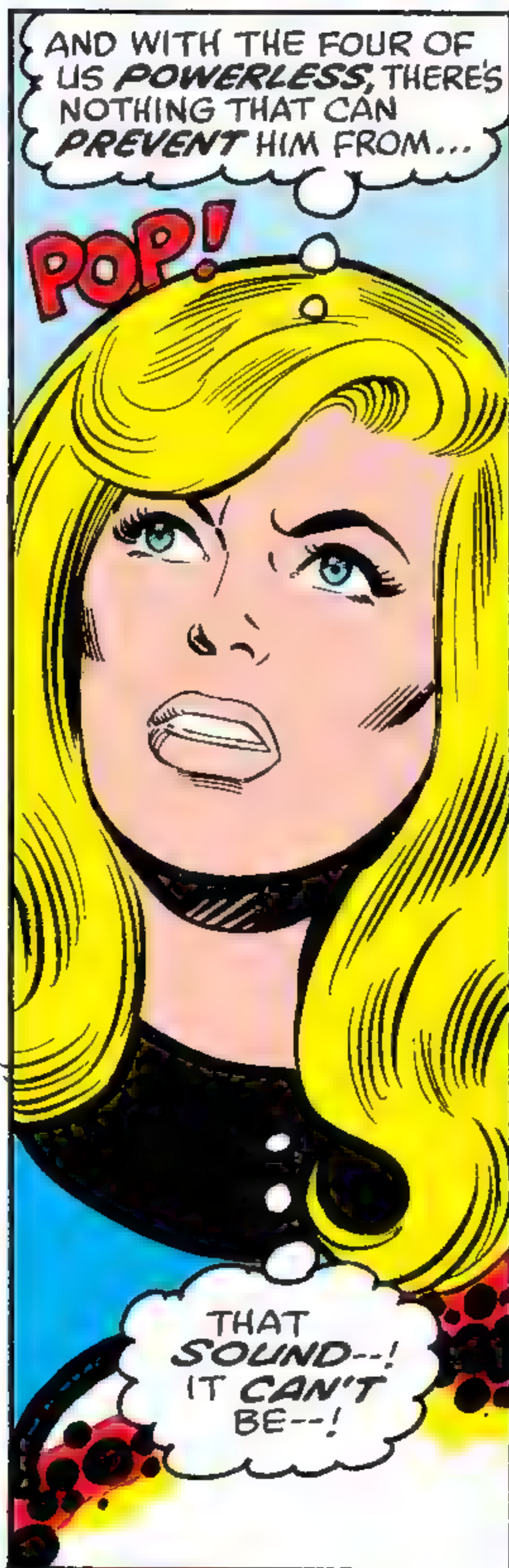
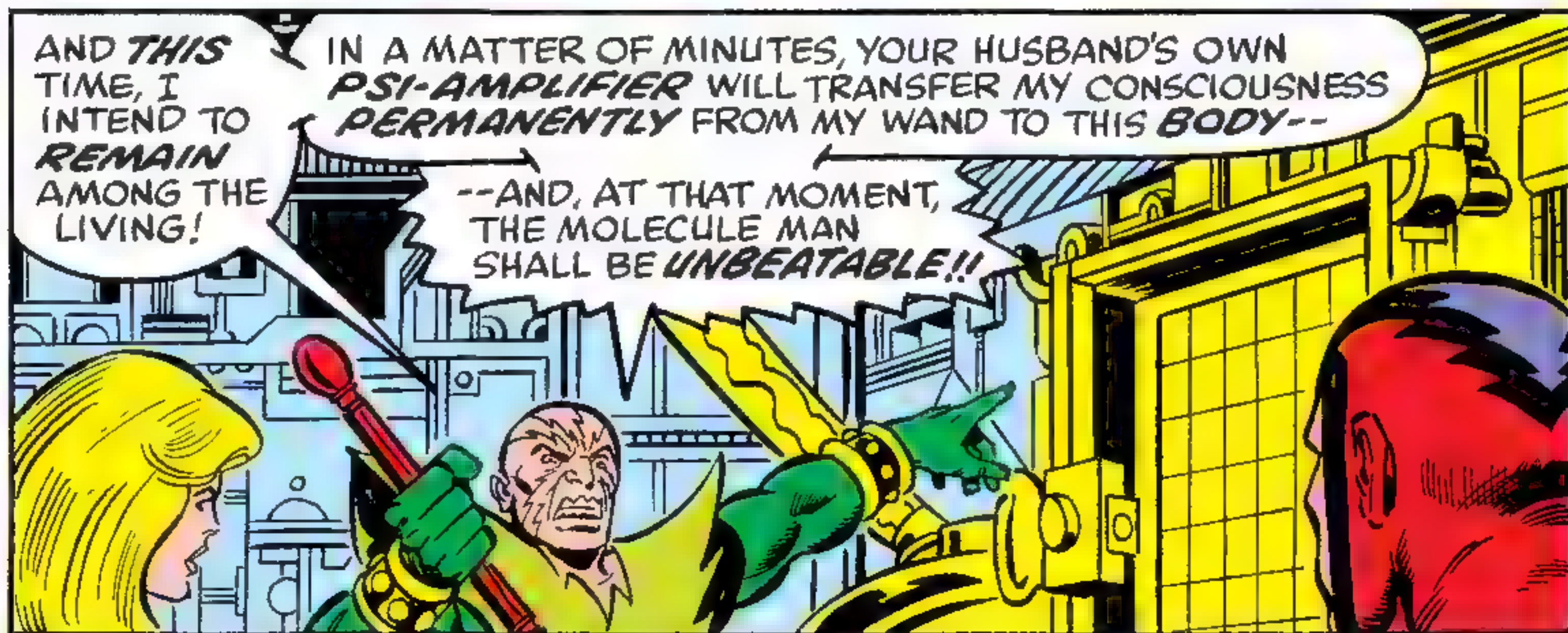
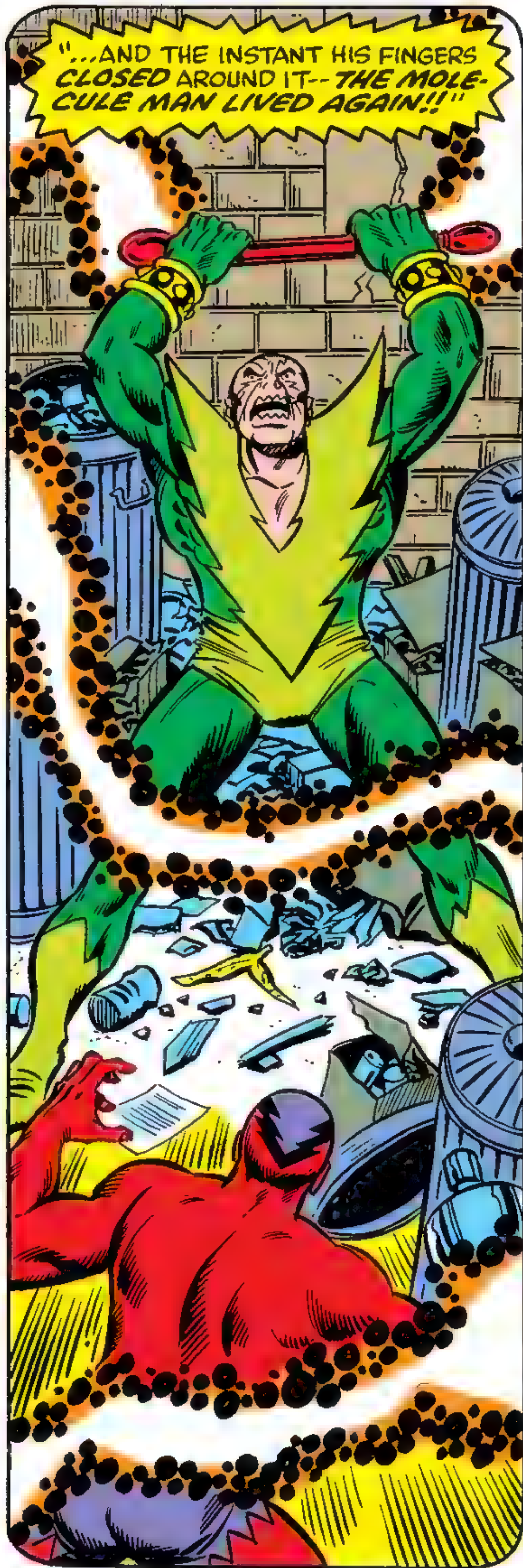
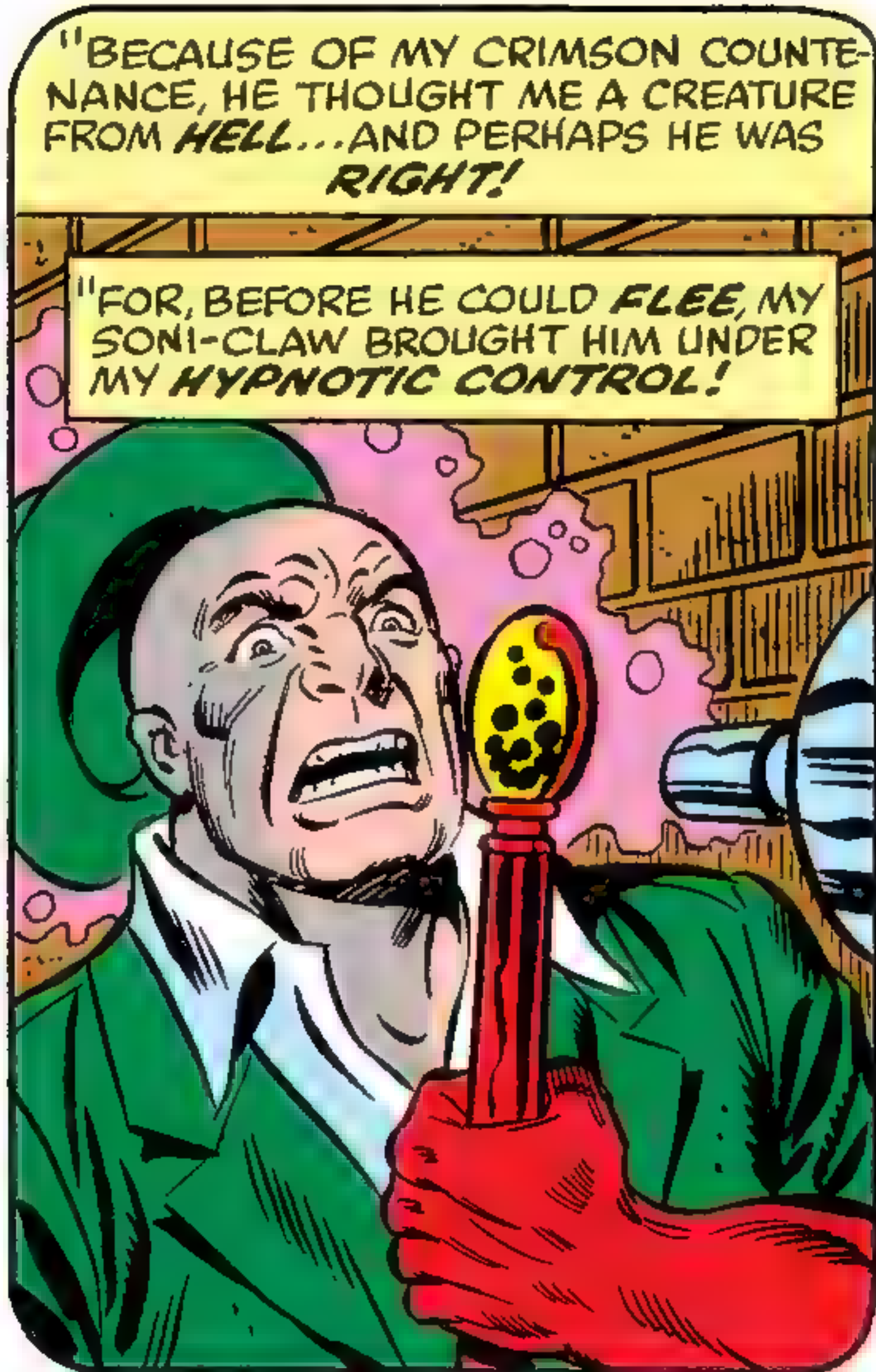
"AFTER SOME NEGOTIATION, MY MOLECULAR FRIEND AND I STRUCK A **BARGAIN...**

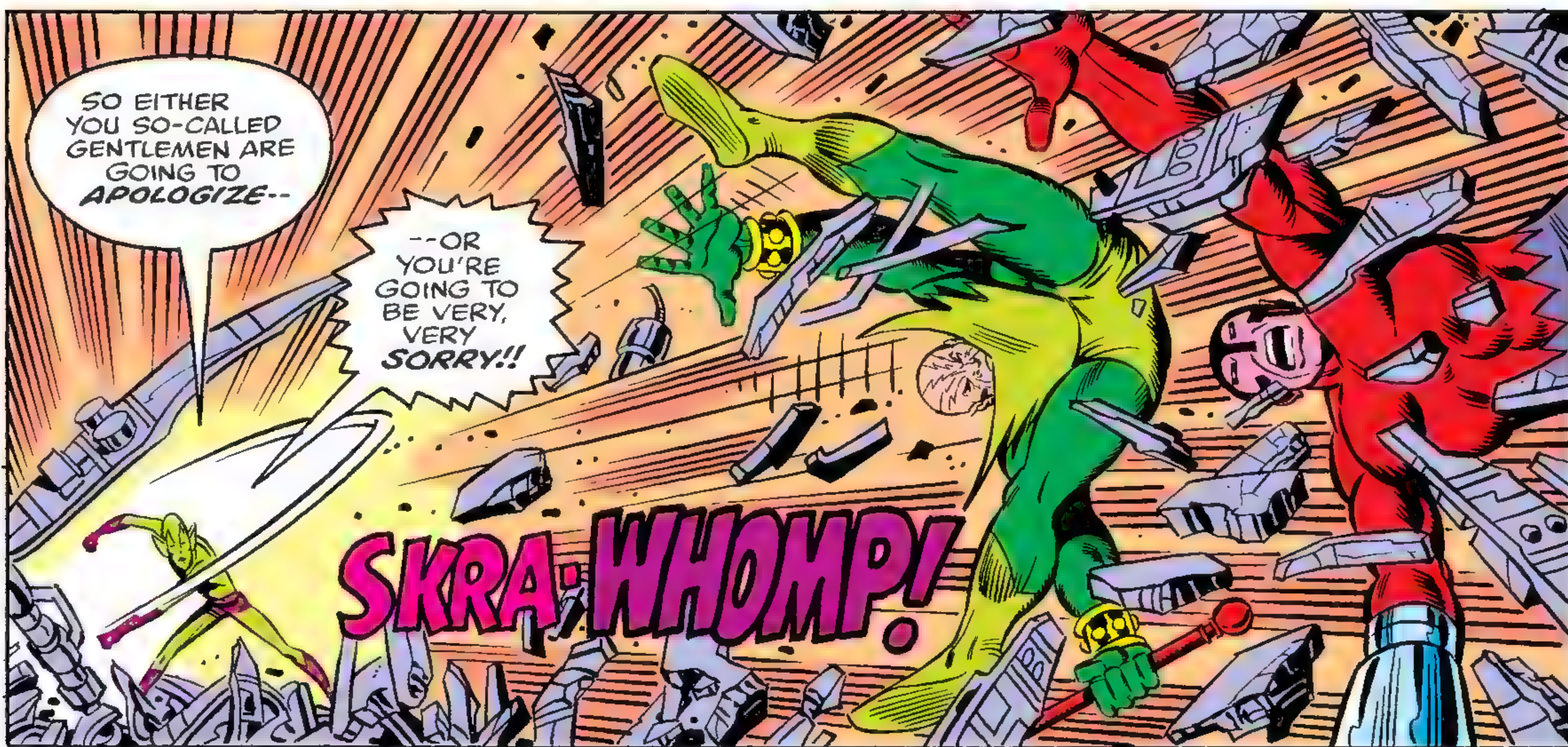
"...THEN RETURNED TO **MANHATTAN** AT THE SPEED OF... **SOUND!**

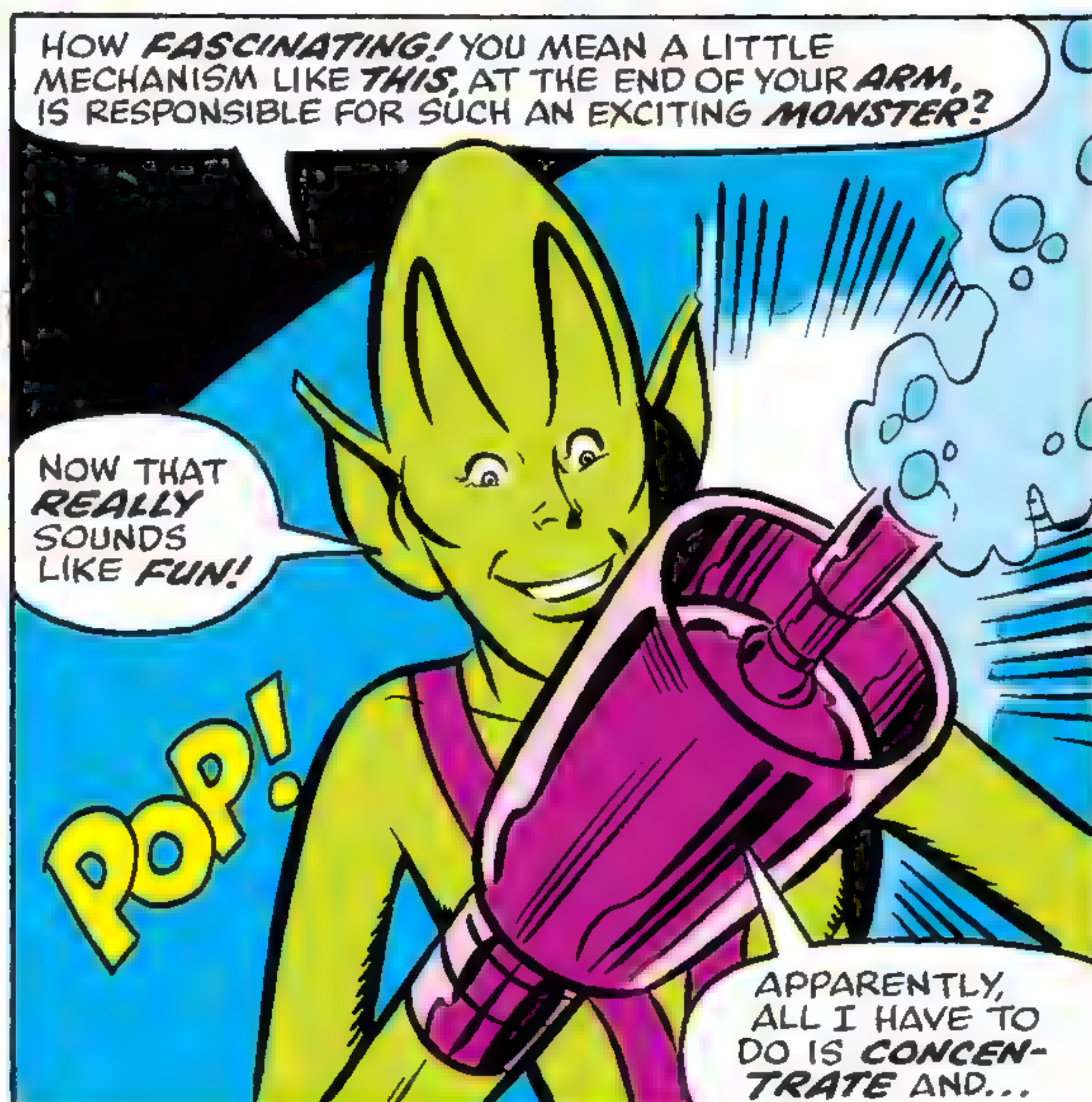
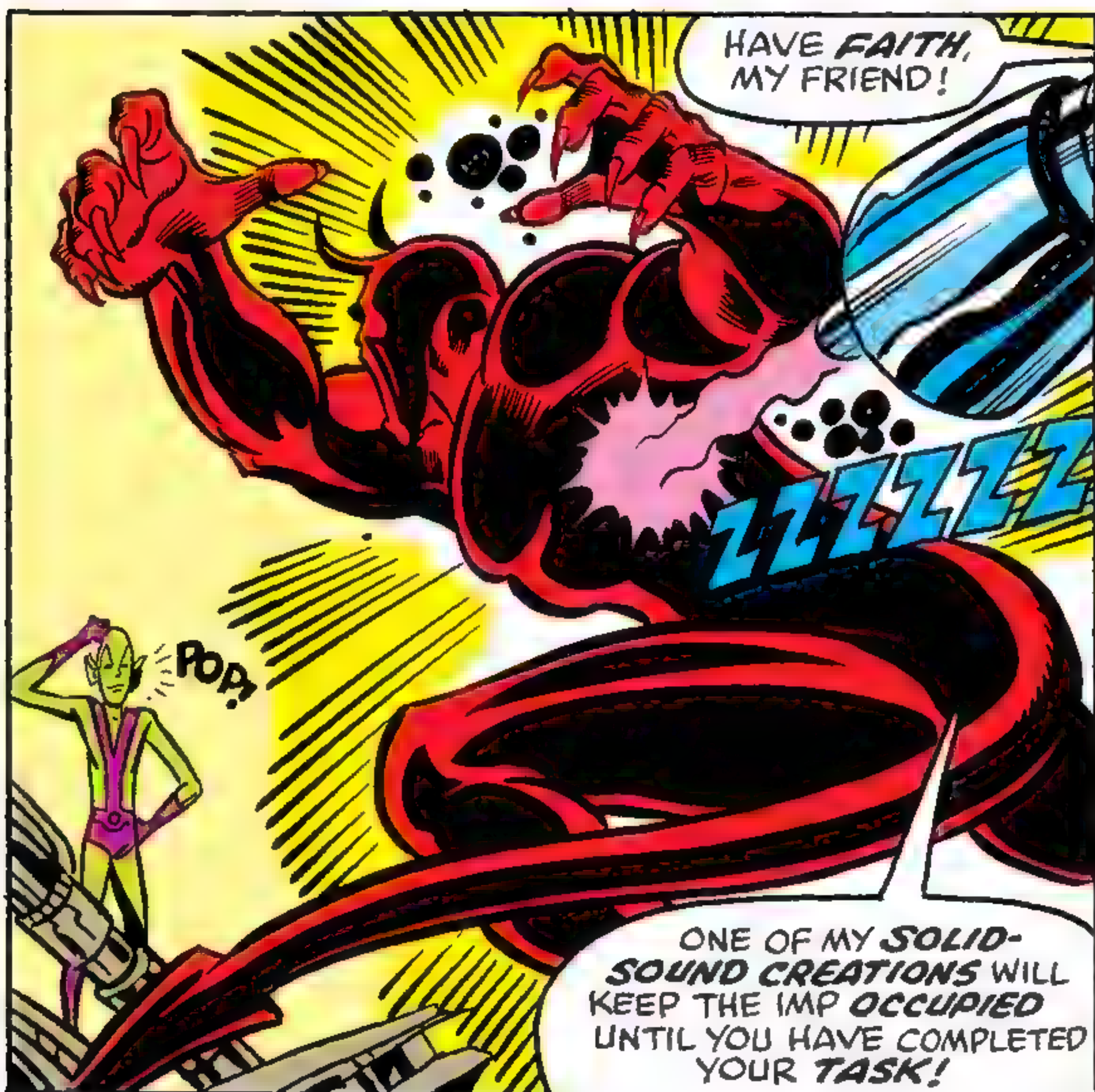
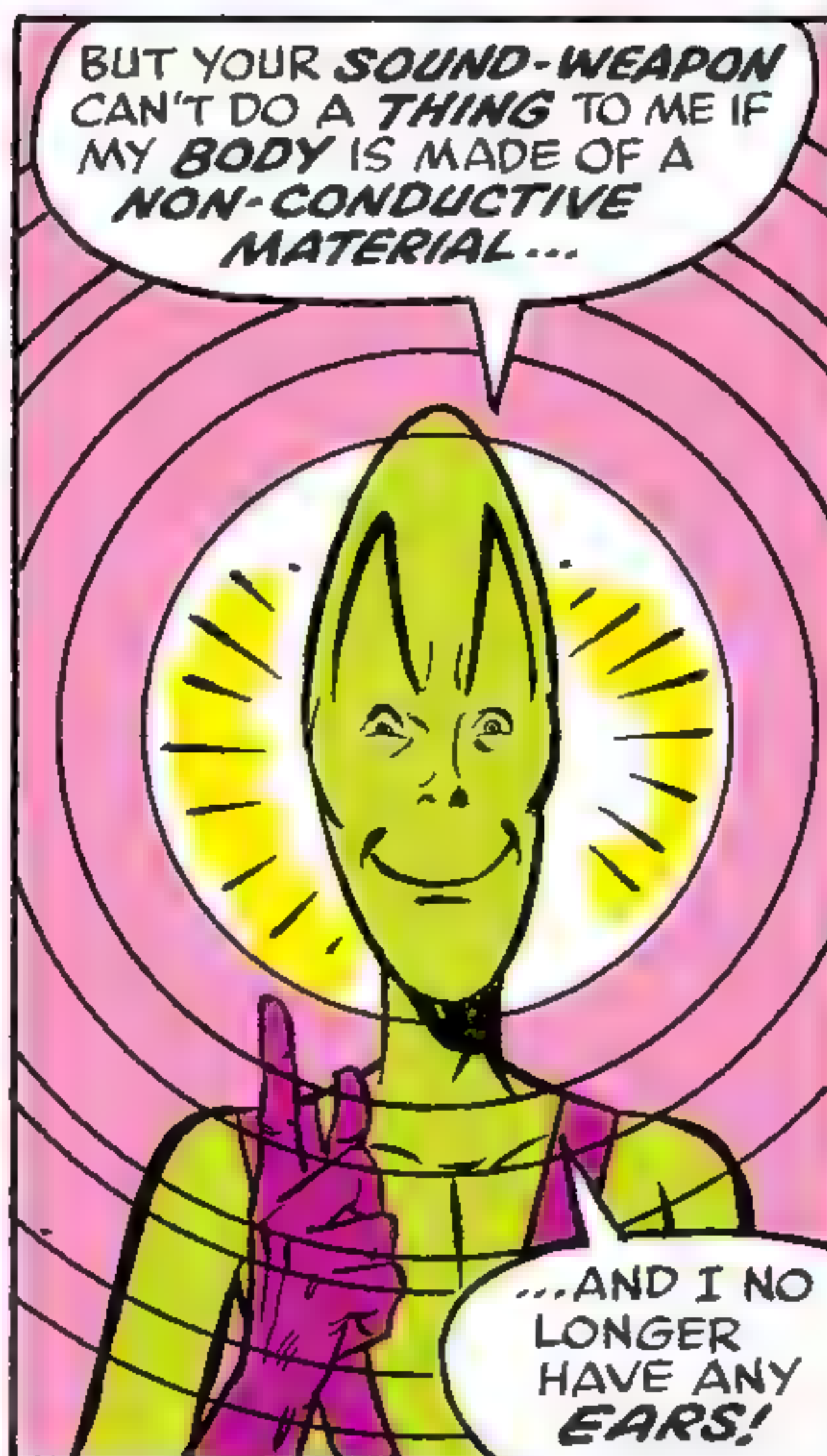
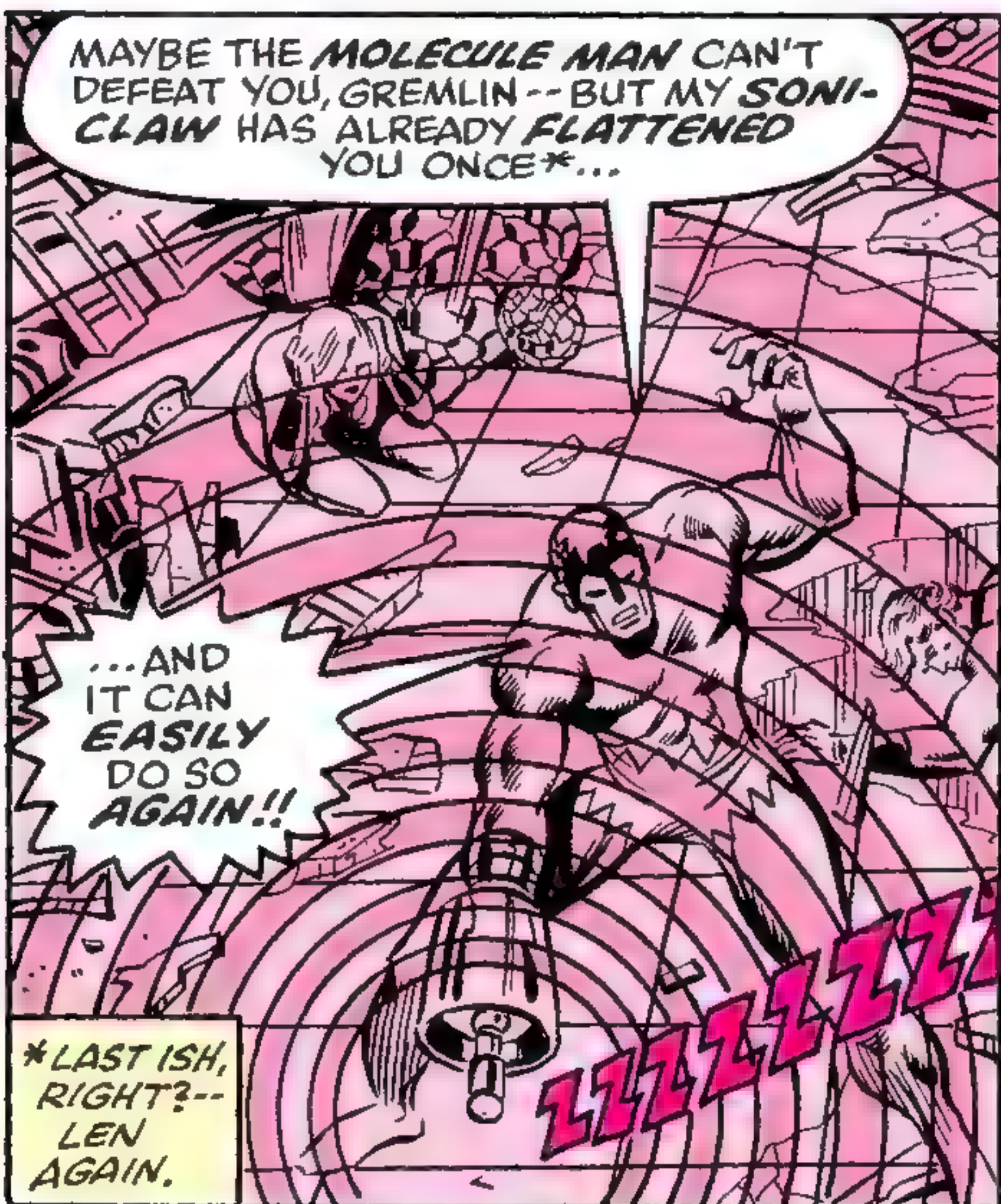
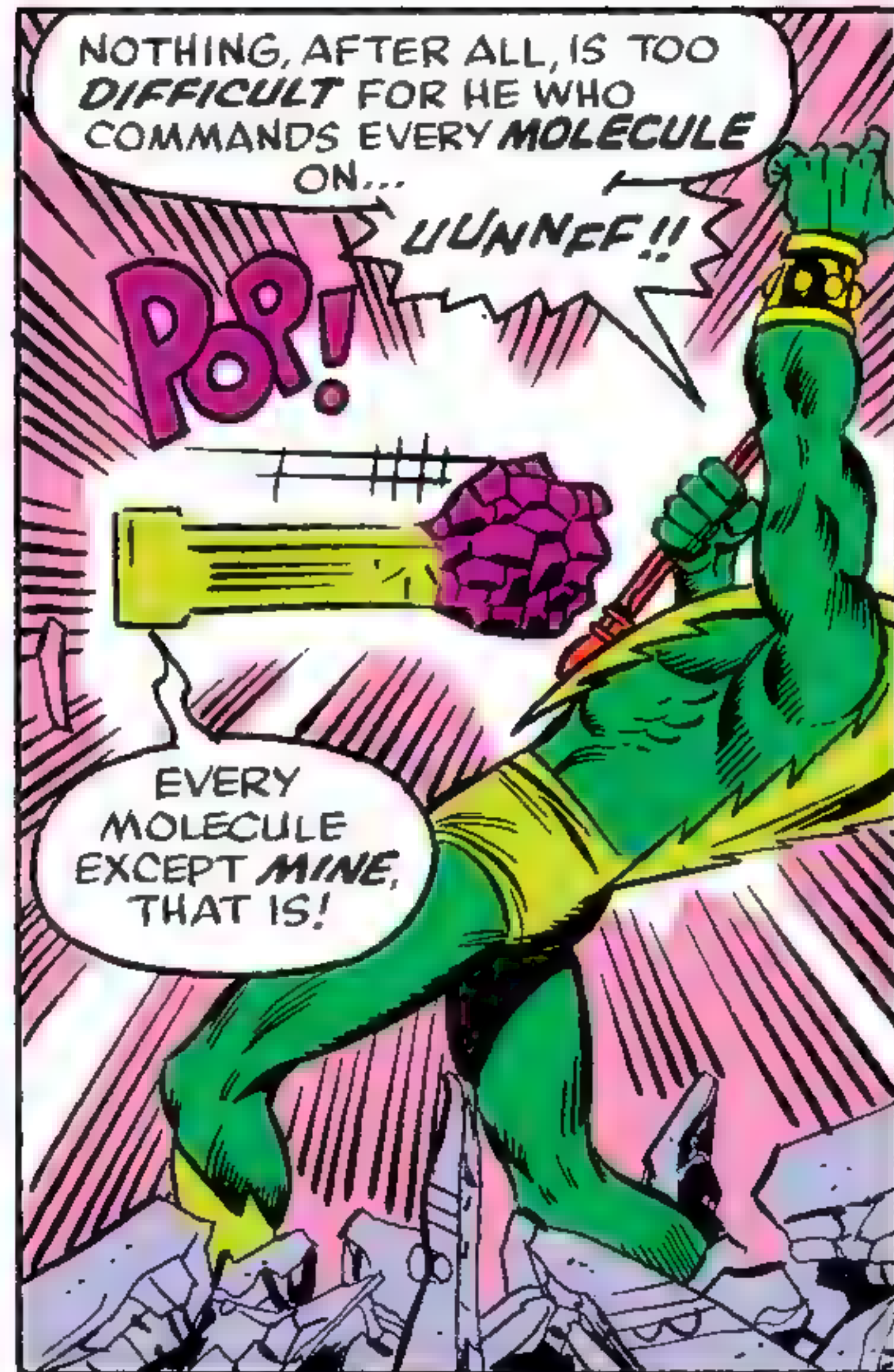


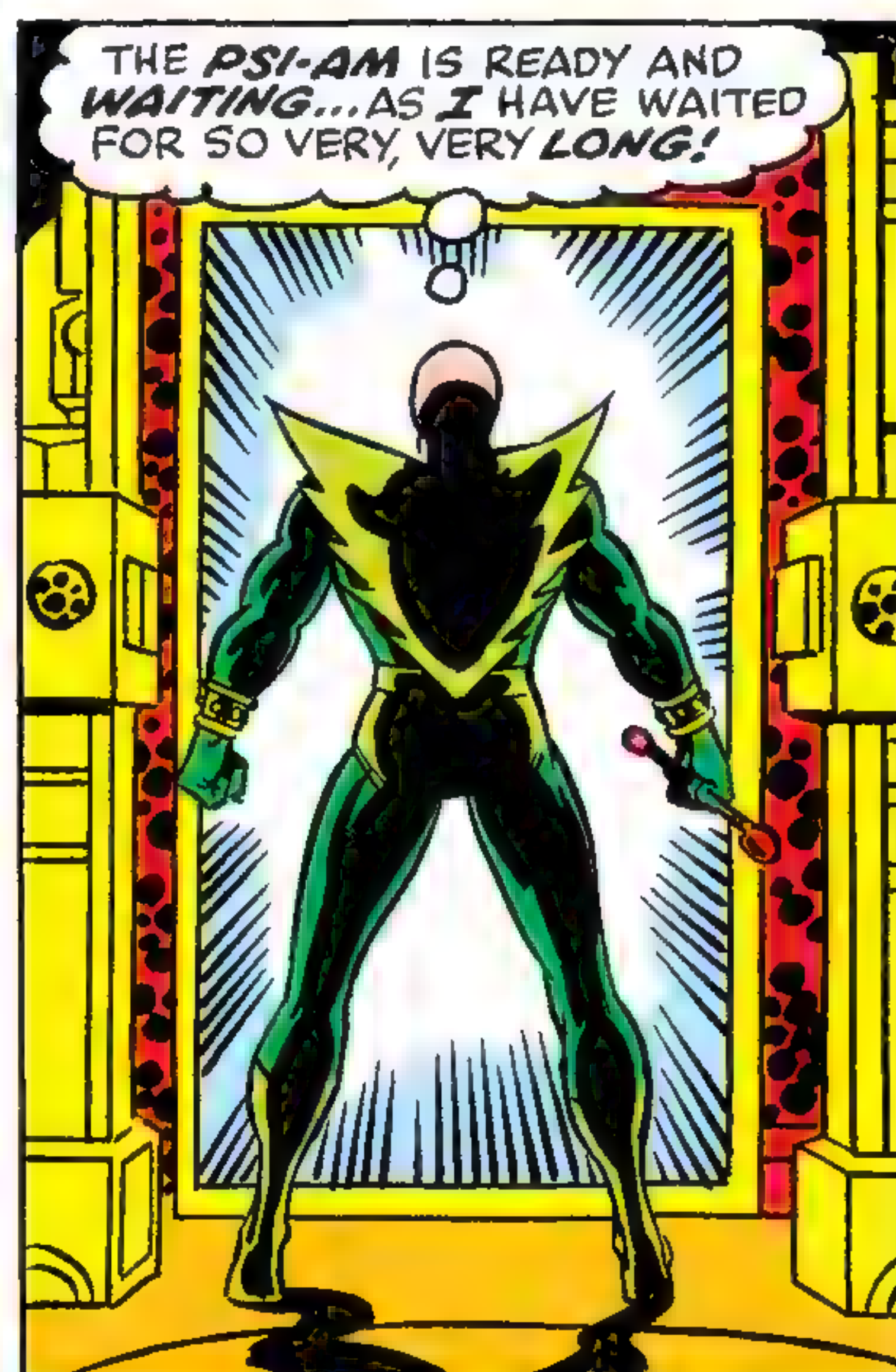
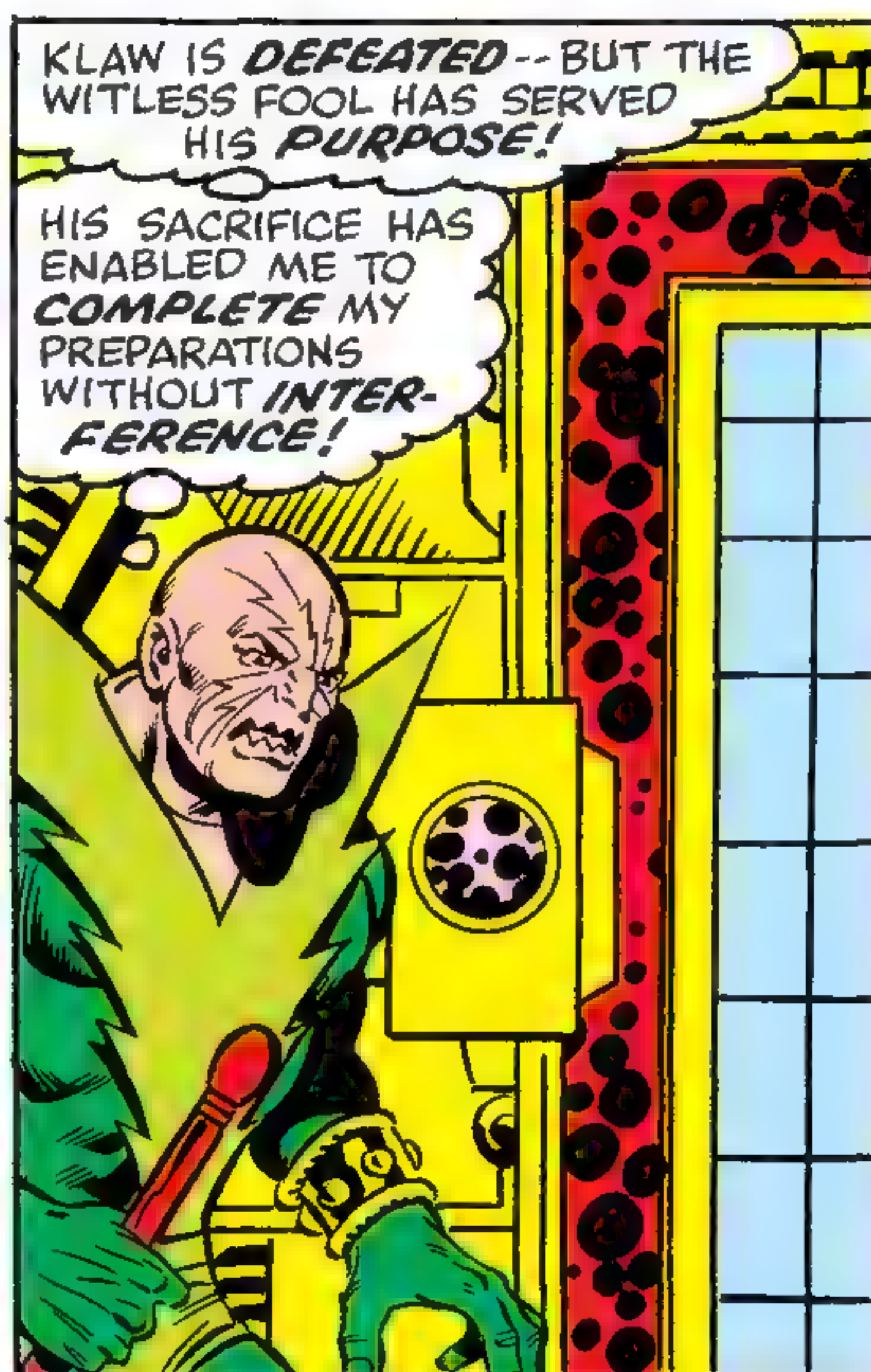
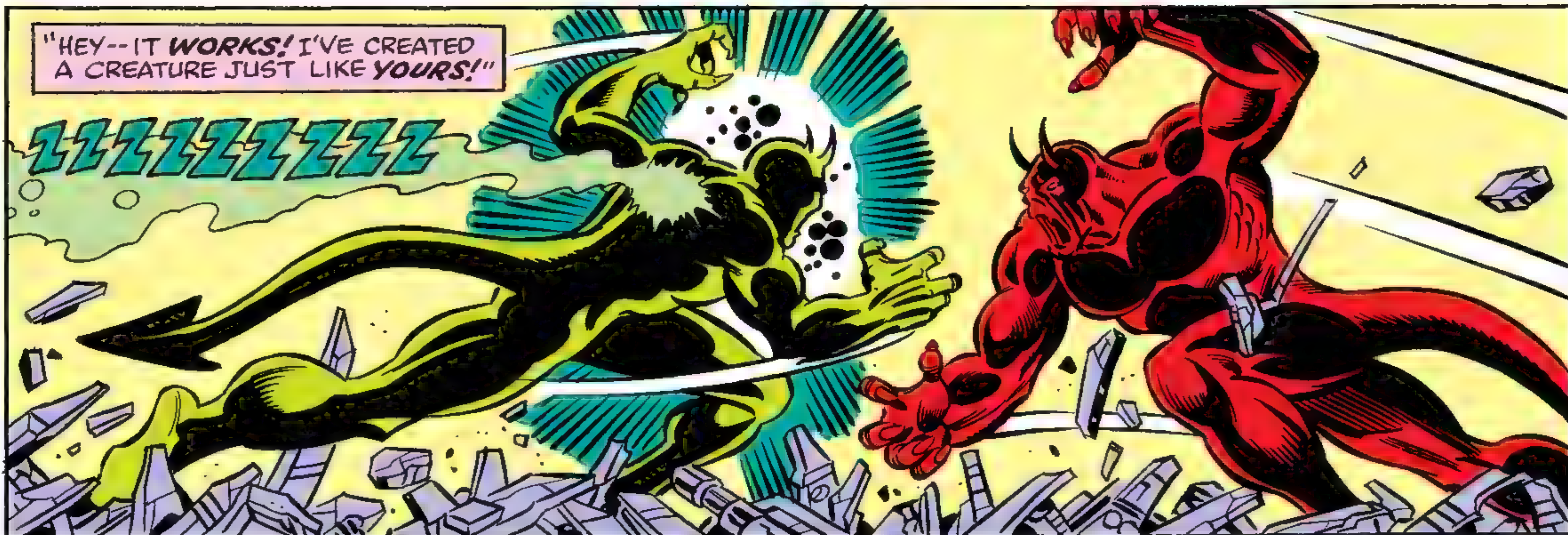
"FOR THE MOLECULE MAN STILL NEEDED A **BODY** TO POSSESS; ONE LACKING THE INTELLIGENCE TO **DEFY** HIS WILL...

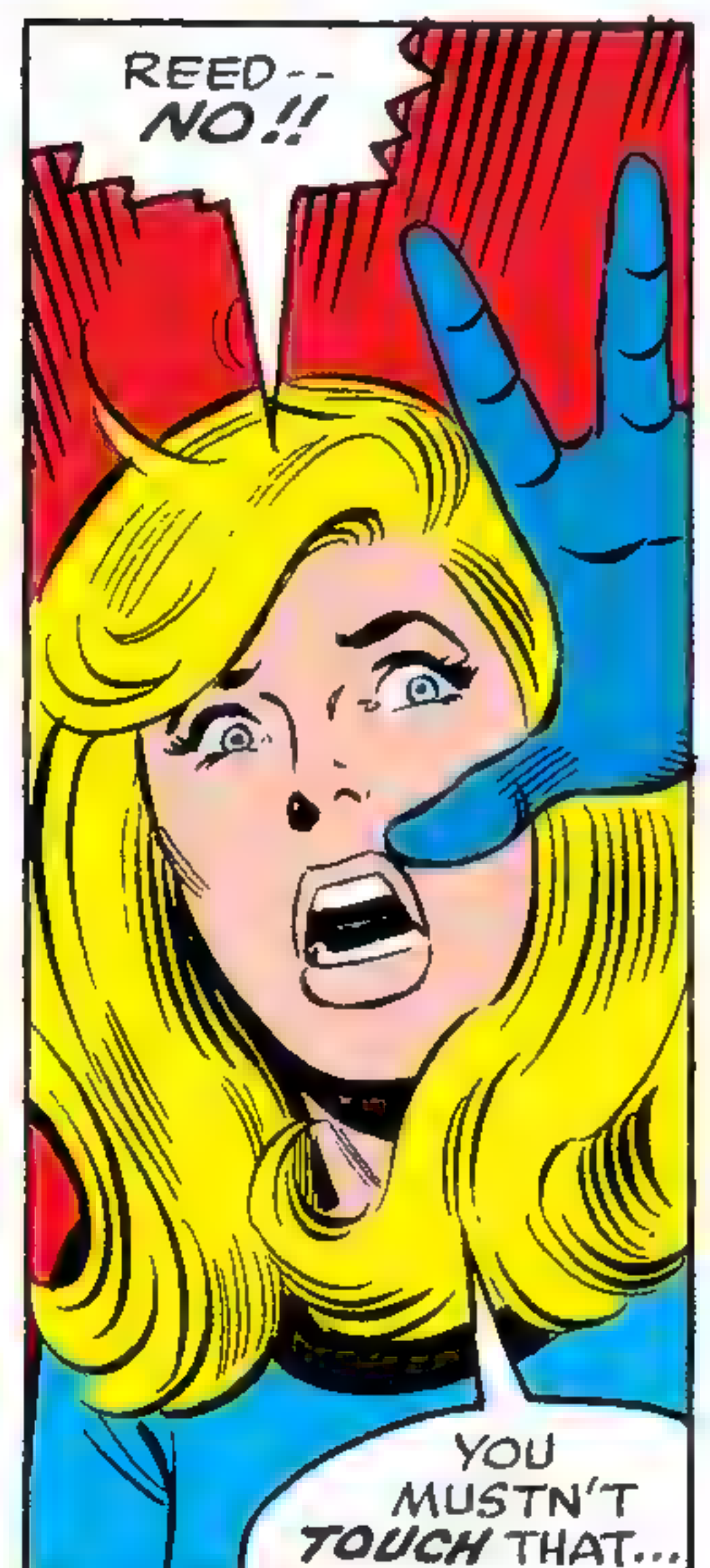
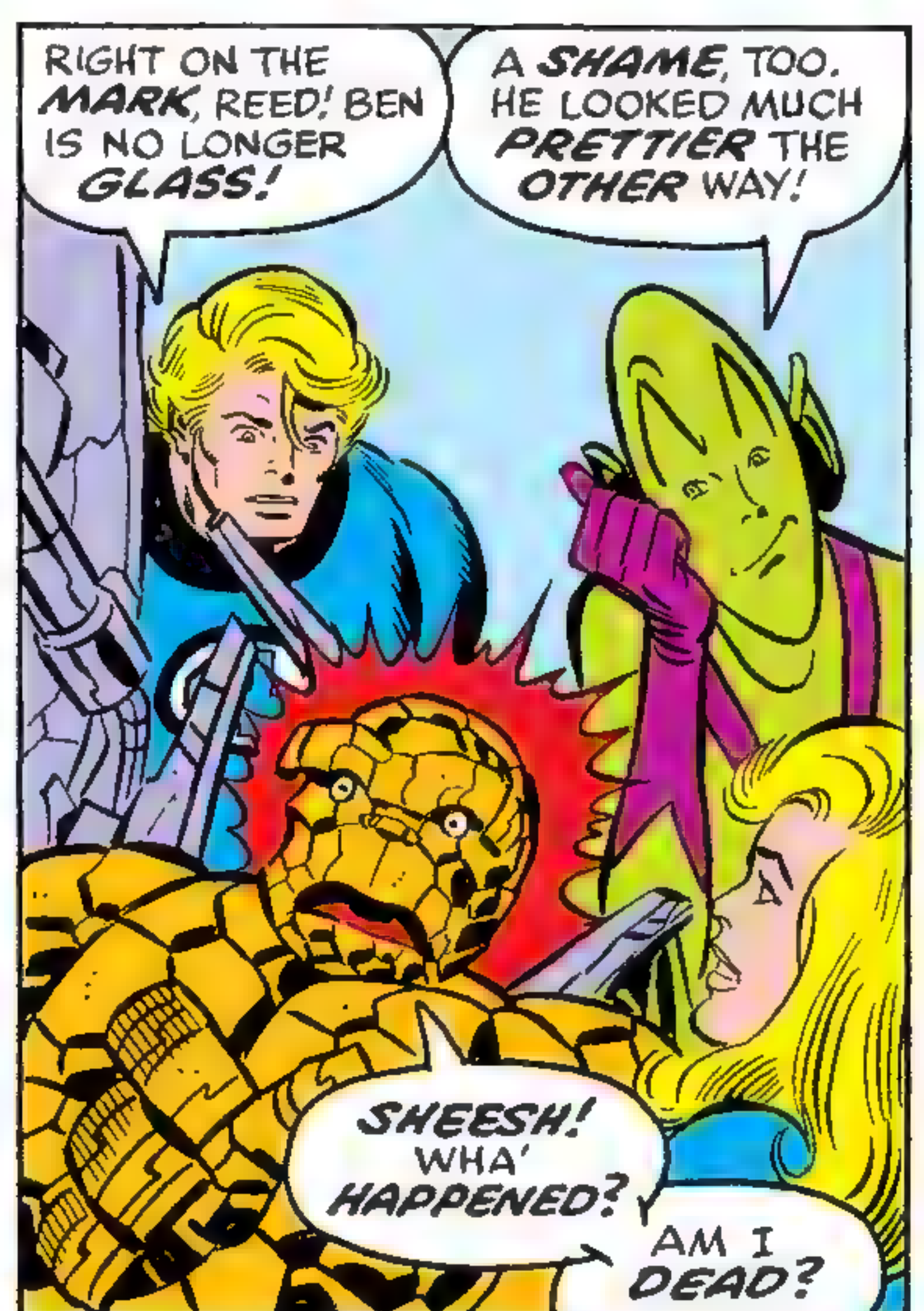
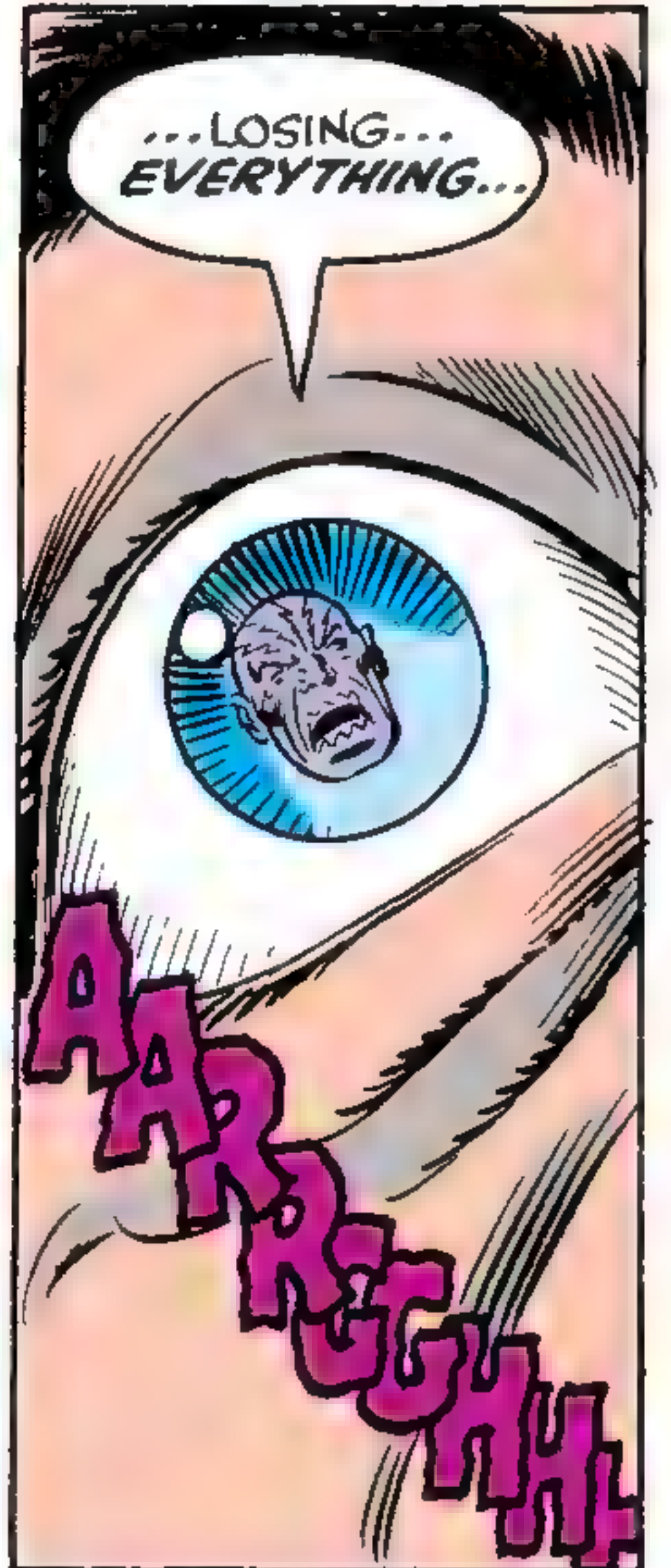
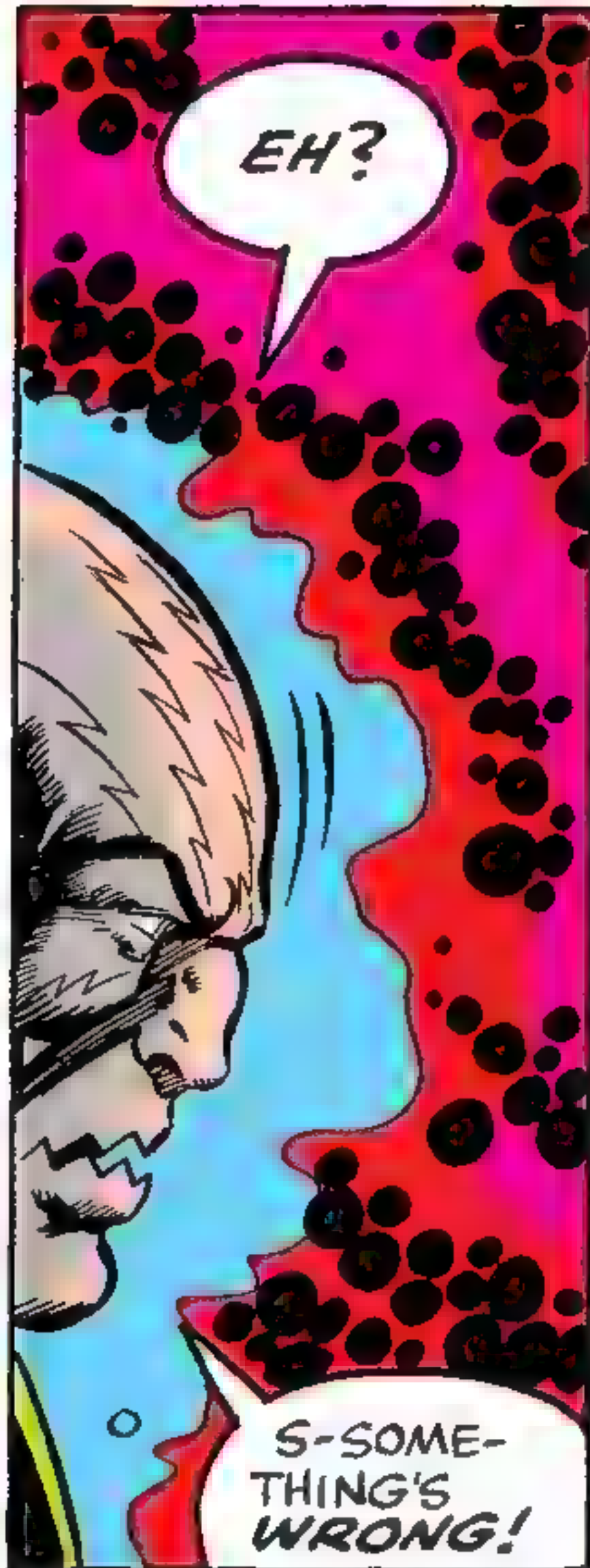
"...YET **POWERFUL** ENOUGH TO SERVE HIS URGENT **NEEDS...**













TOO LATE,
WOMAN! I CAUGHT
YOUR FOOLISH HUSBAND
OFF-GUARD-- BEFORE
HE COULD MUSTER ANY
SORT OF DEFENSE
AGAINST MY MENTAL
ASSAULT!

FOR ALL INTENTS
AND PURPOSES,
REED RICHARDS
IS DEAD, WOMAN--
AND IN HIS PLACE...

...THE
MOLECULE
MAN REIGNS
SUPREME!!

**NEXT
ISSUE:**

THE WATCHER RETURNS! JUST IN TIME FOR...

THE RAMPAGE OF REED RICHARDS!

BE HERE!

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



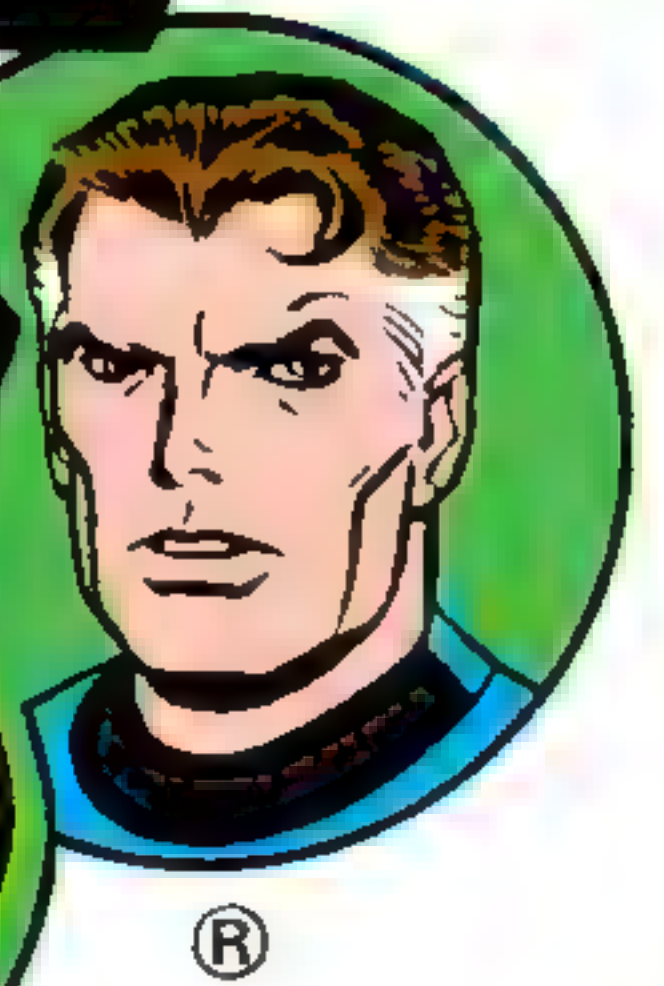
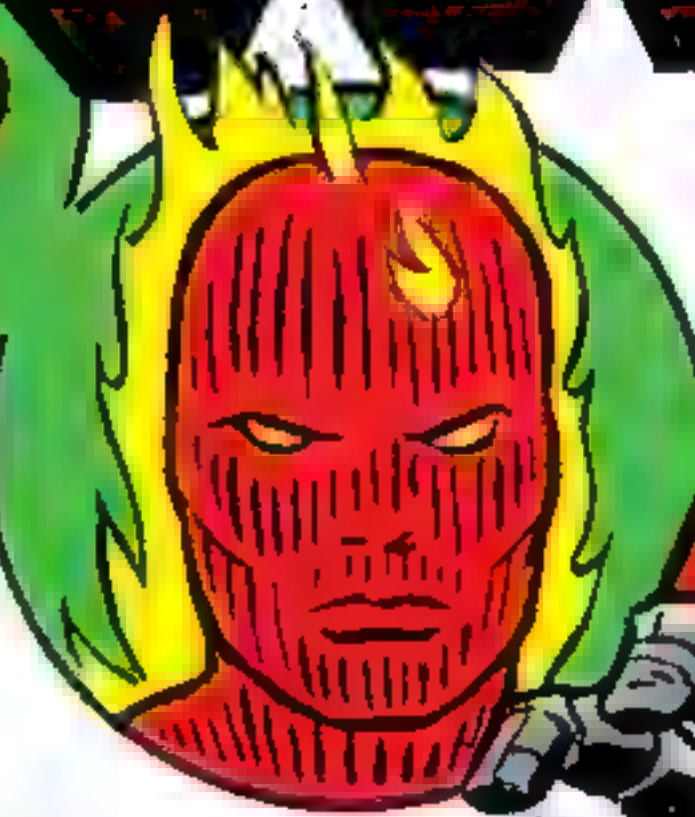
35¢
©

188
NOV
02462

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



THE
MOLECULE
MAN HAS TAKEN
POSSESSION OF
REED'S BODY--

--AND NOW
HE'S BRINGING
ALL THE
BUILDINGS
TO LIFE!

BUT THERE'S
NO WAY WE CAN
STOP HIM
WITHOUT
CLOBBERIN'
STRETCHO,
TOO!



THE RAMPAGE OF
REED RICHARDS!

PEREZ & SINNOTT

A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

LEN WEIN
WRITER/EDITOR

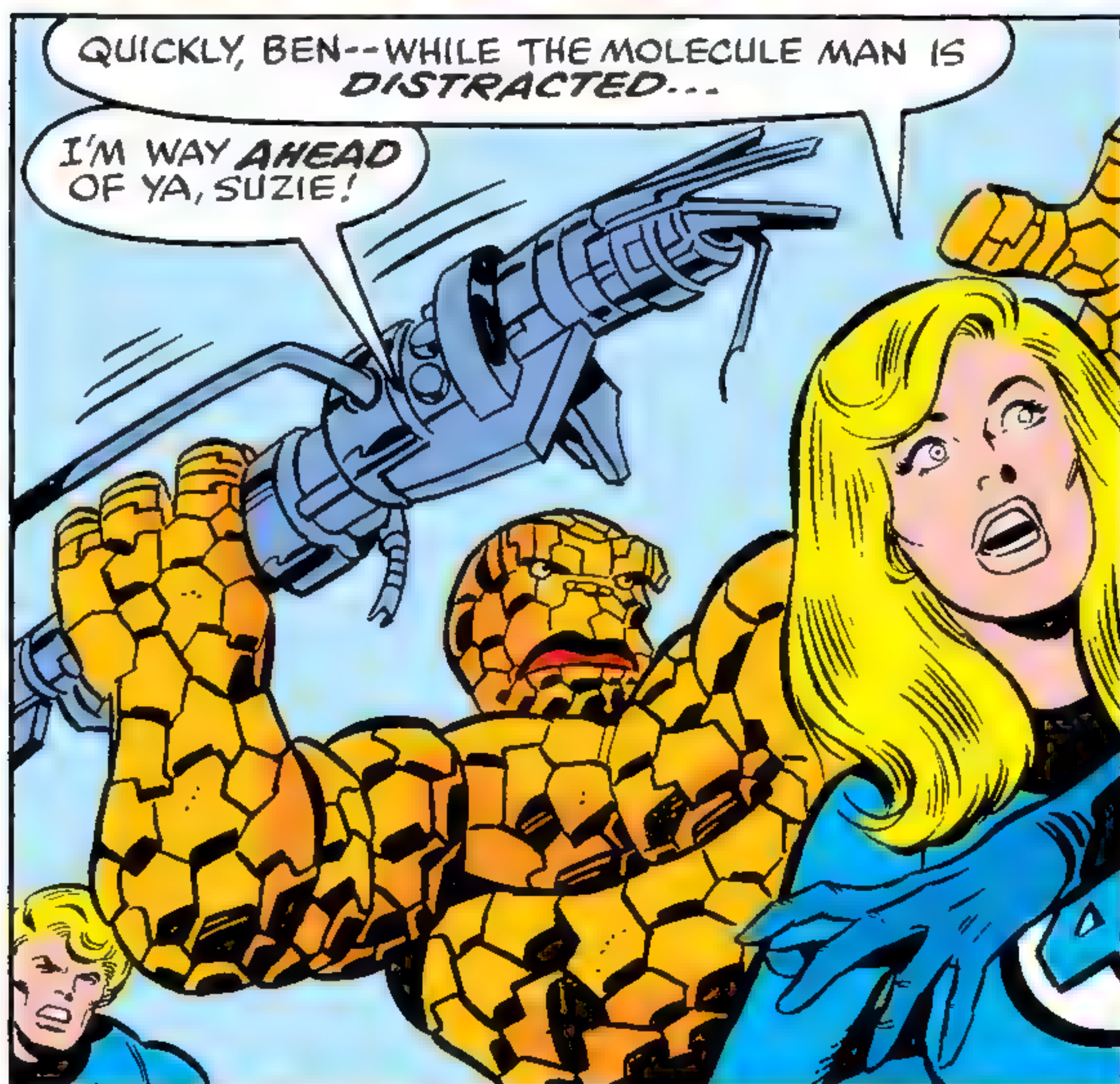
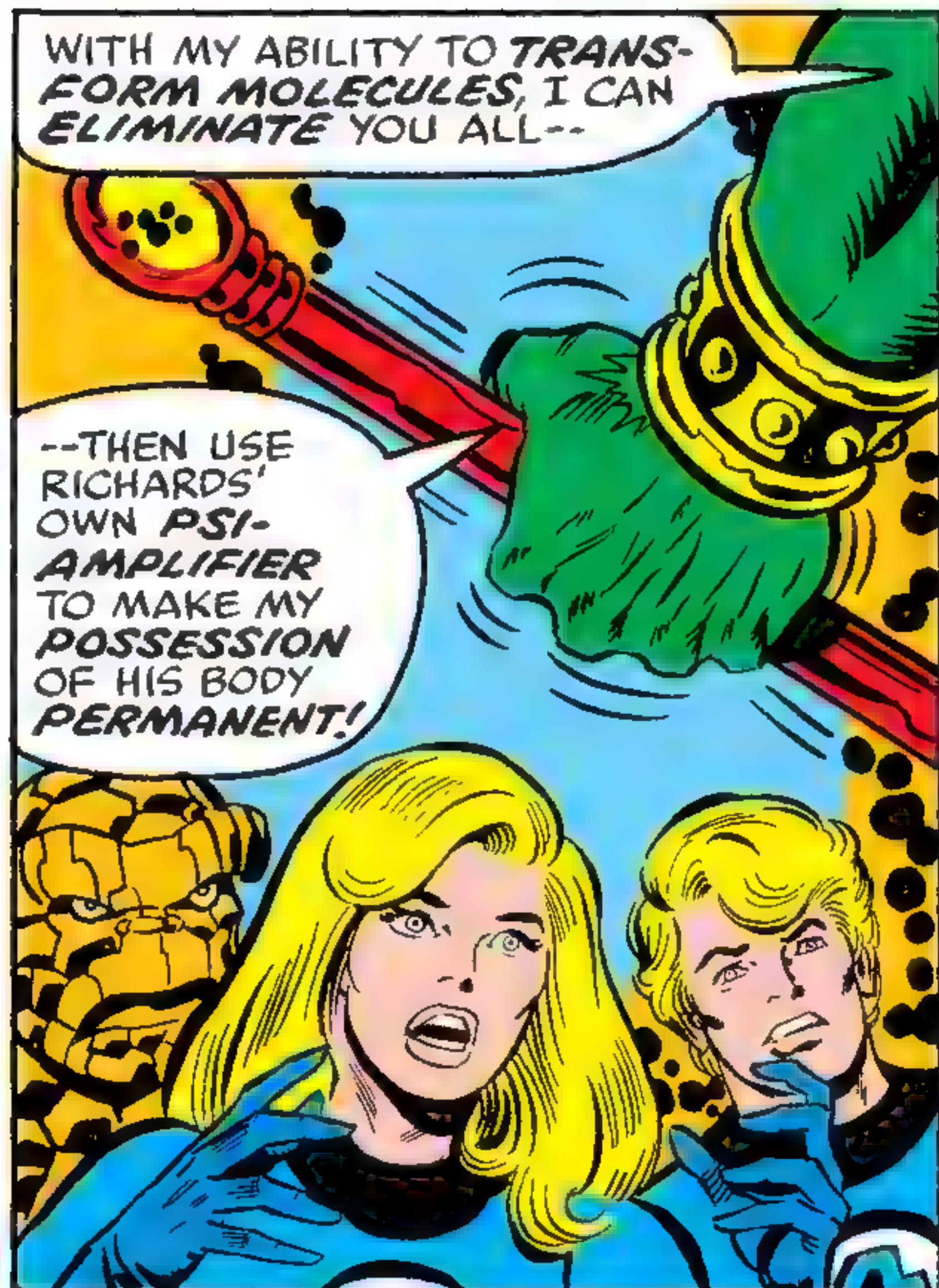
GEORGE PÉREZ & JOE SINNOTT
ARTISTS / STORYTELLERS

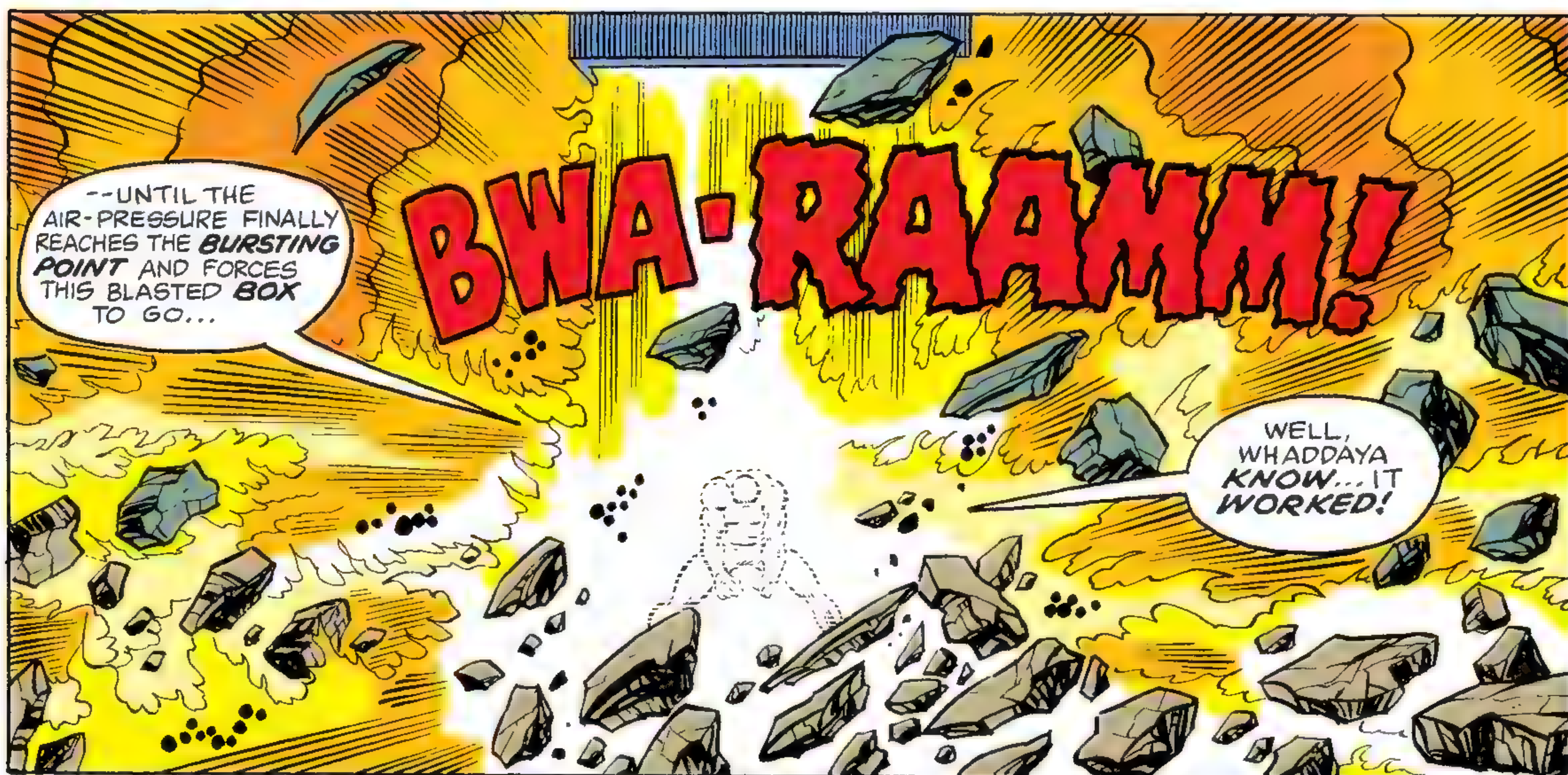
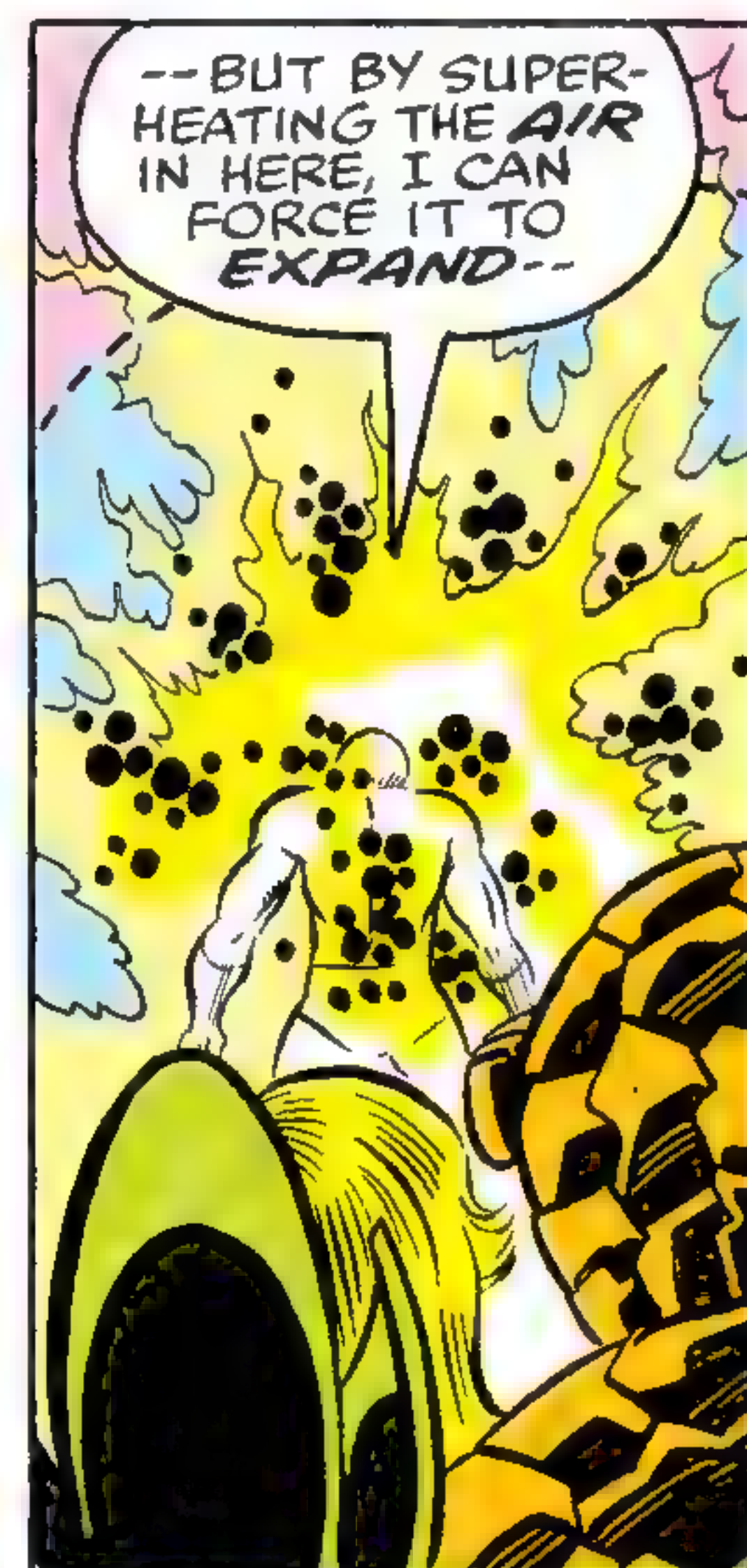
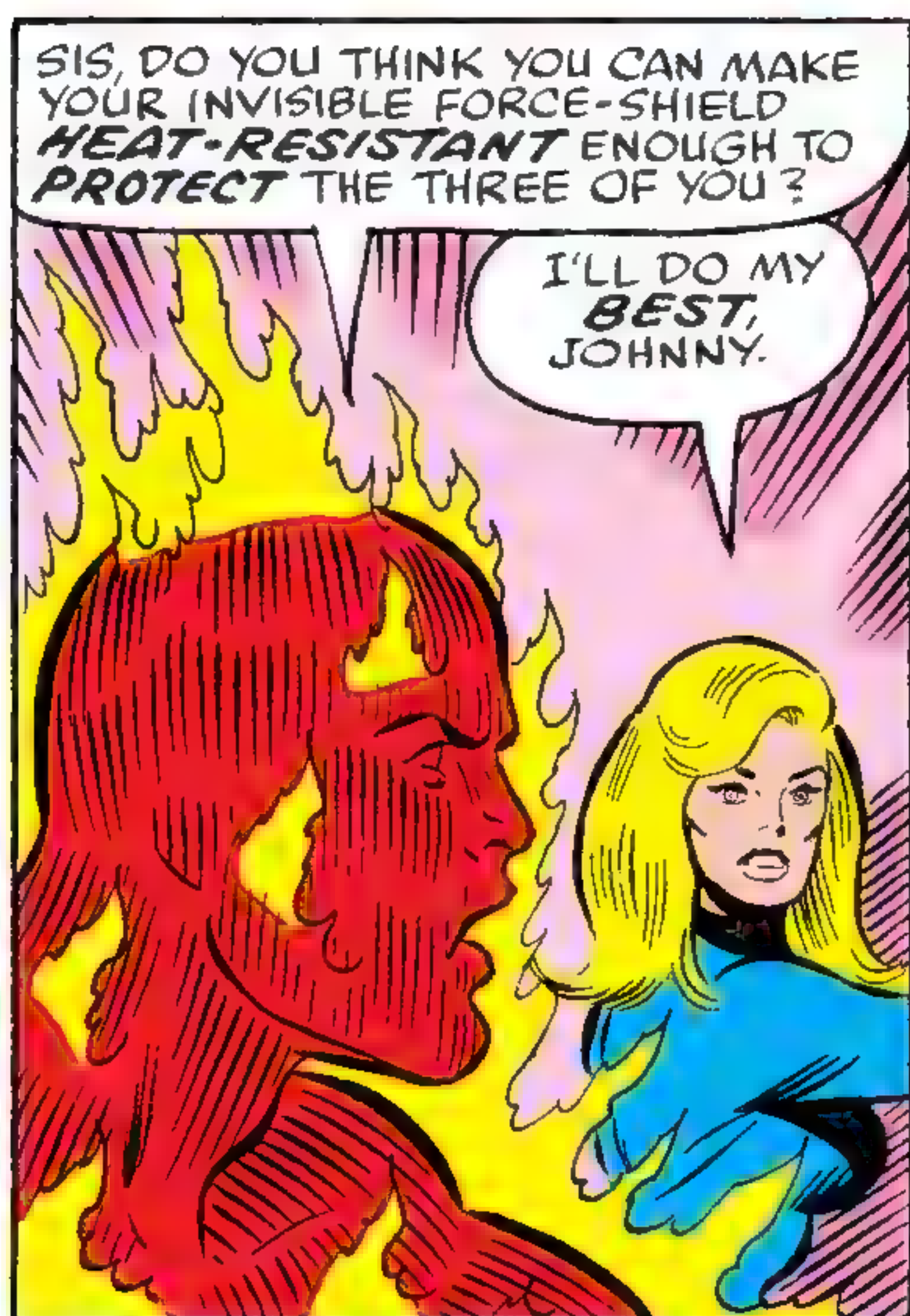
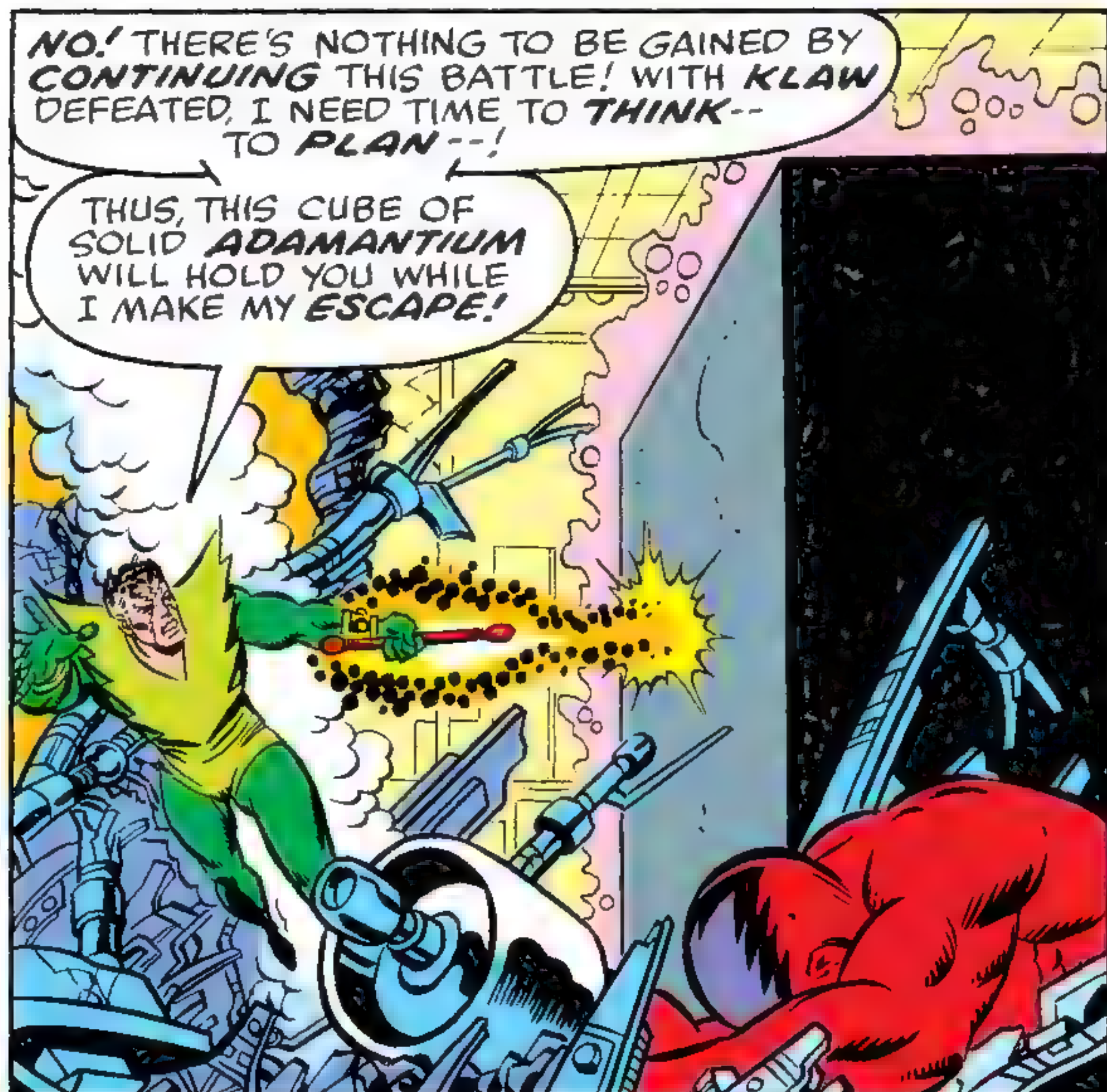
GLYNIS WEIN
COLORIST

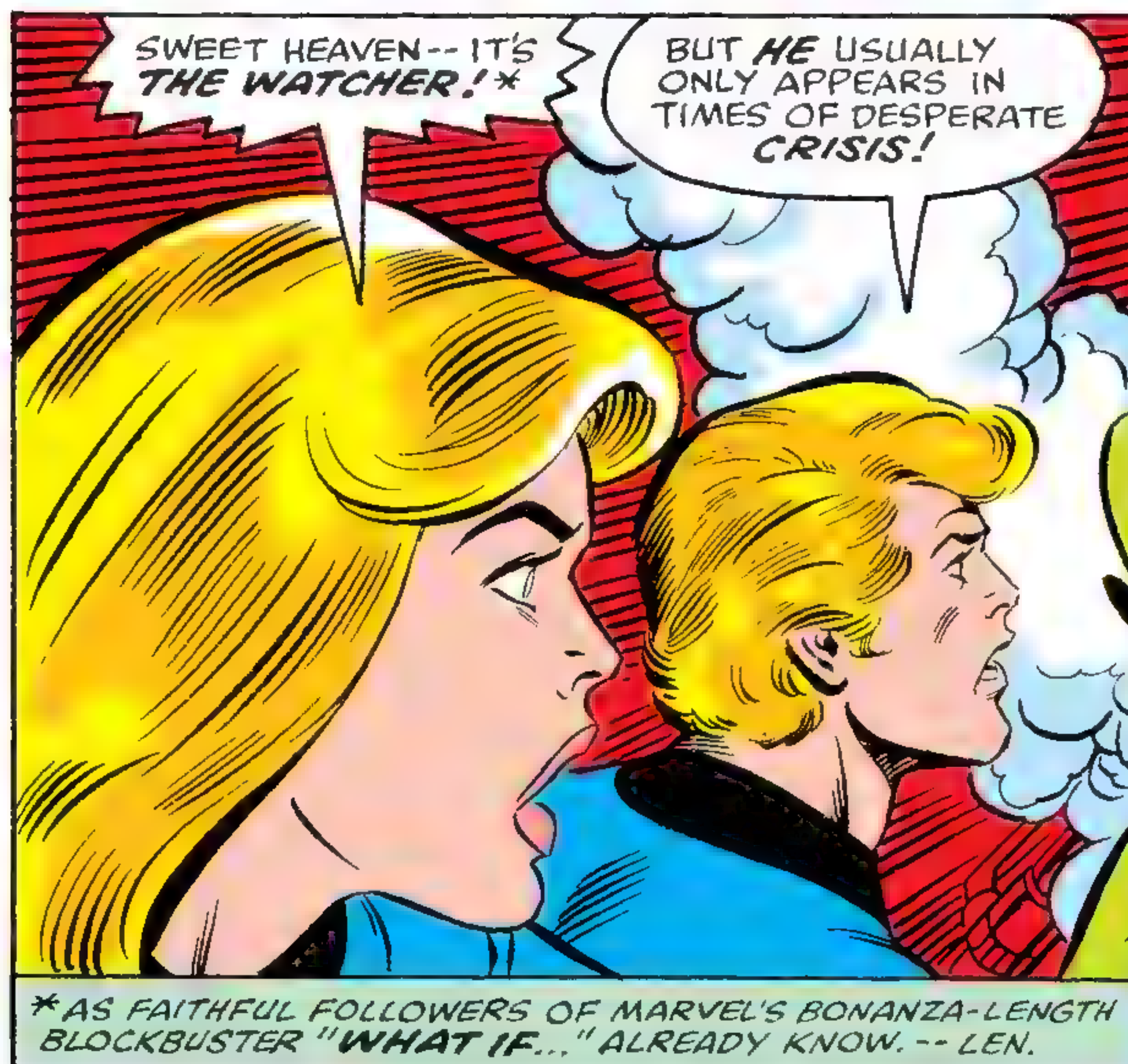
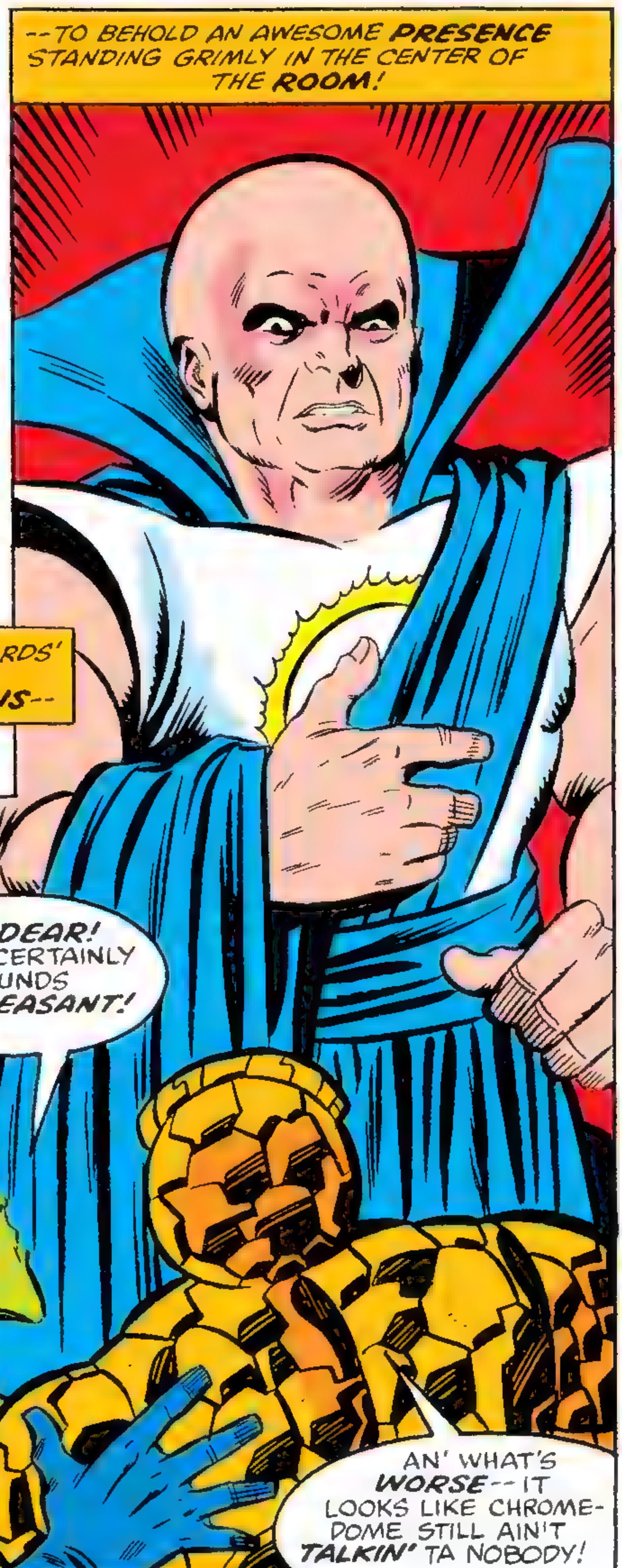
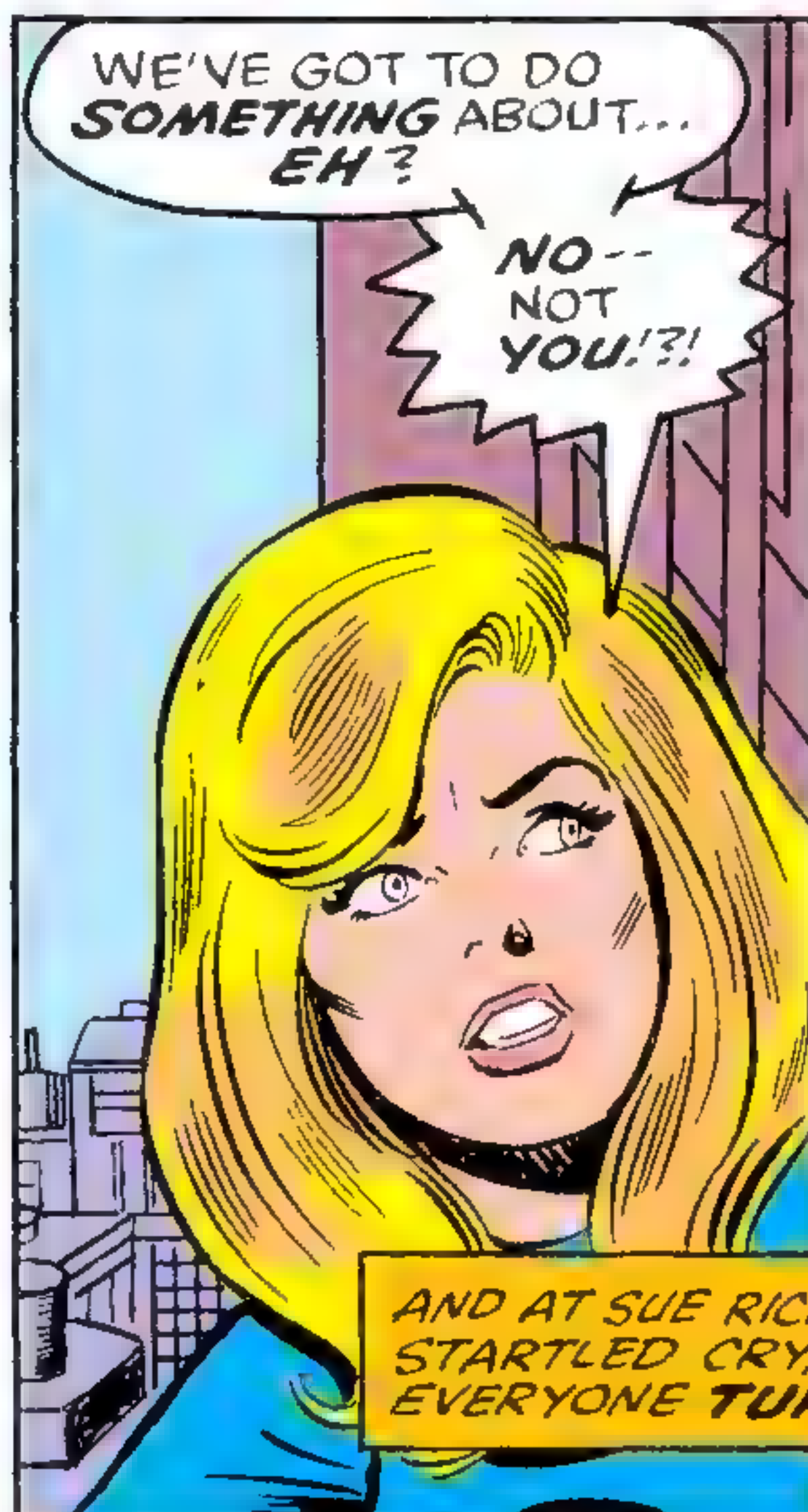
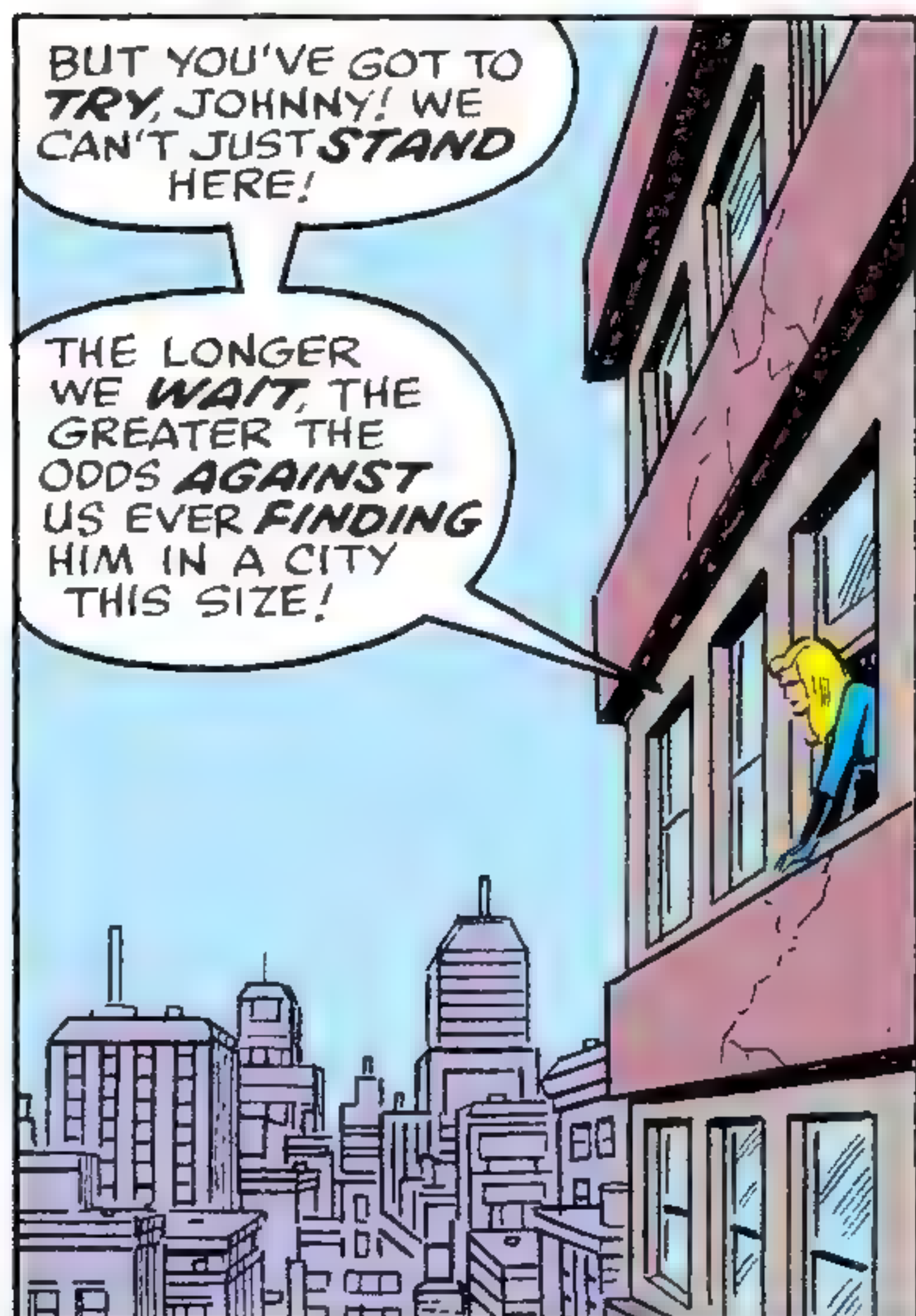
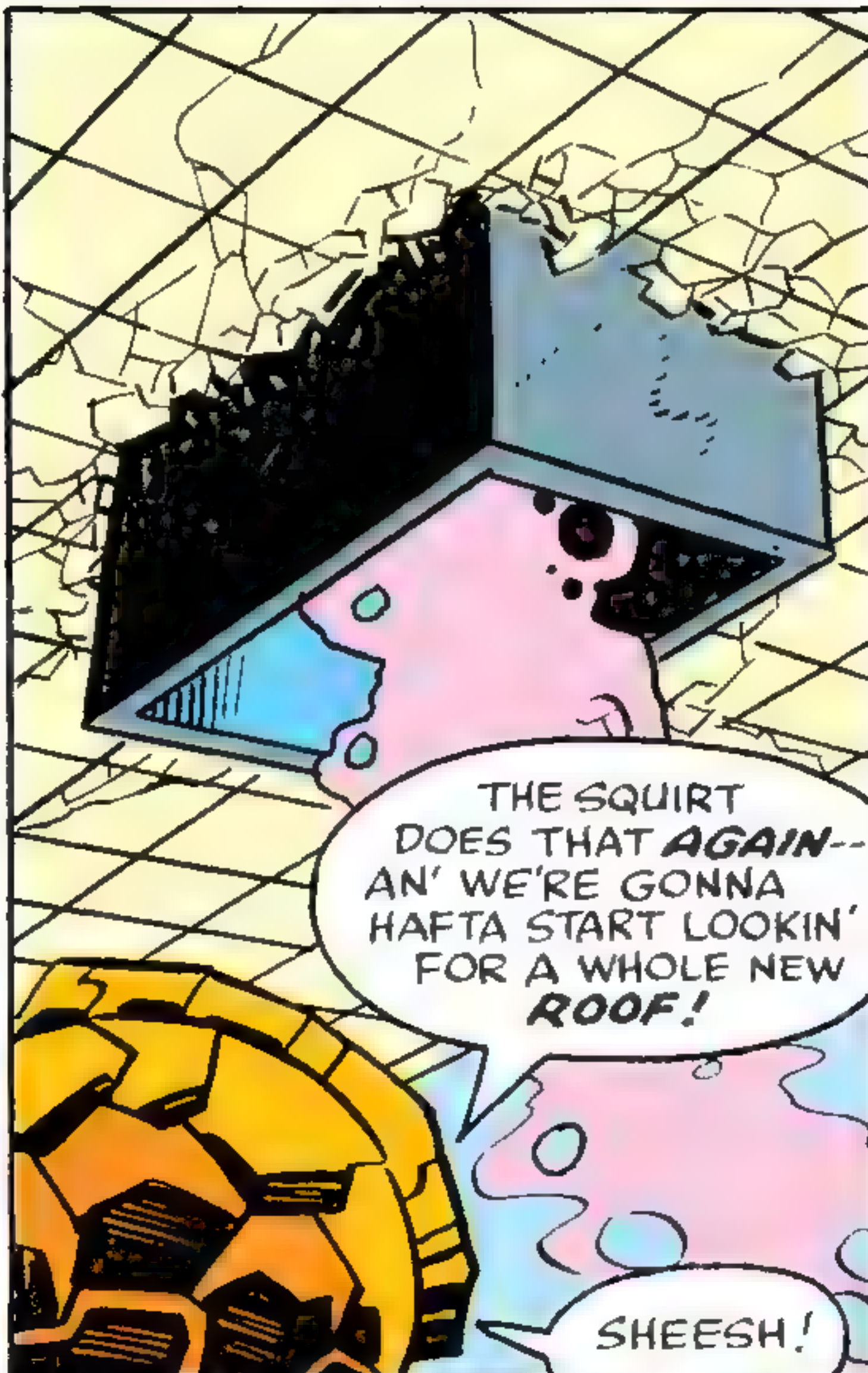
JOE ROSEN
LETTERER

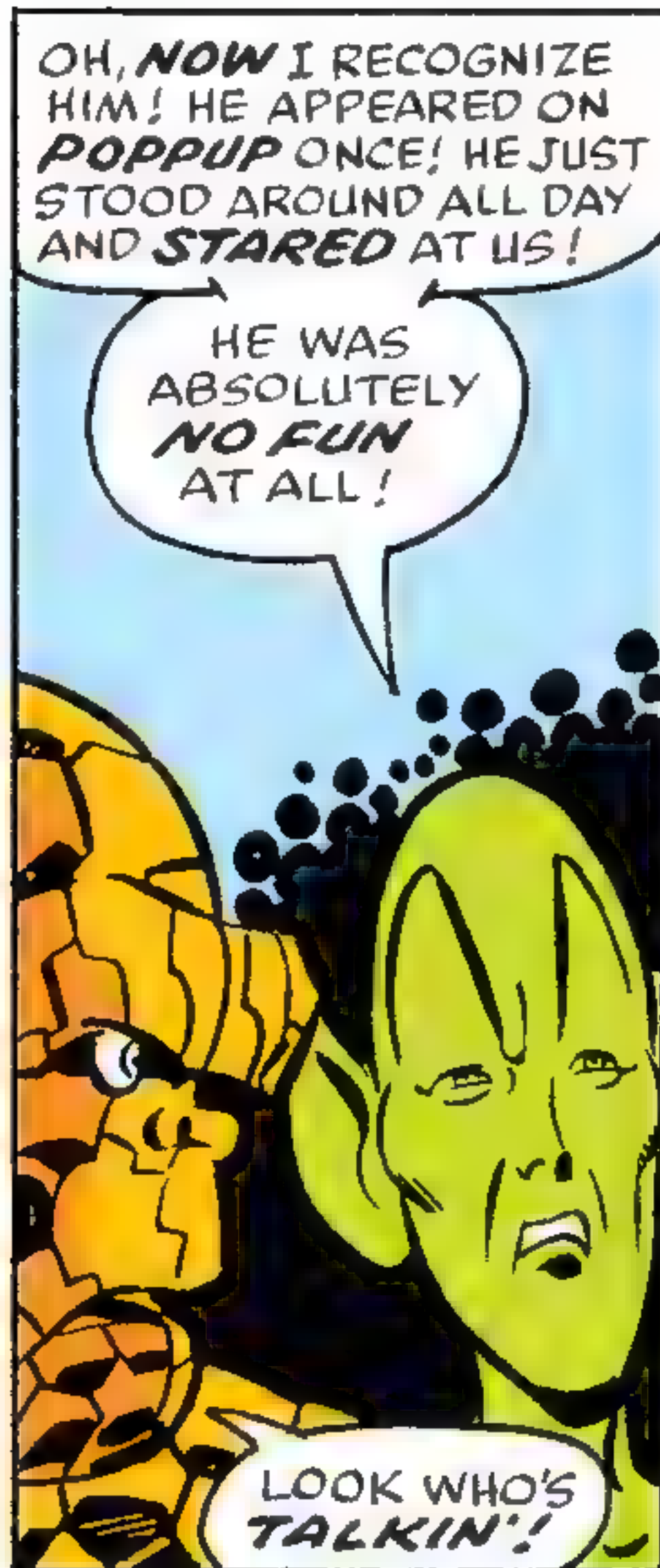
THE RAMPAGE OF REED RICHARDS!







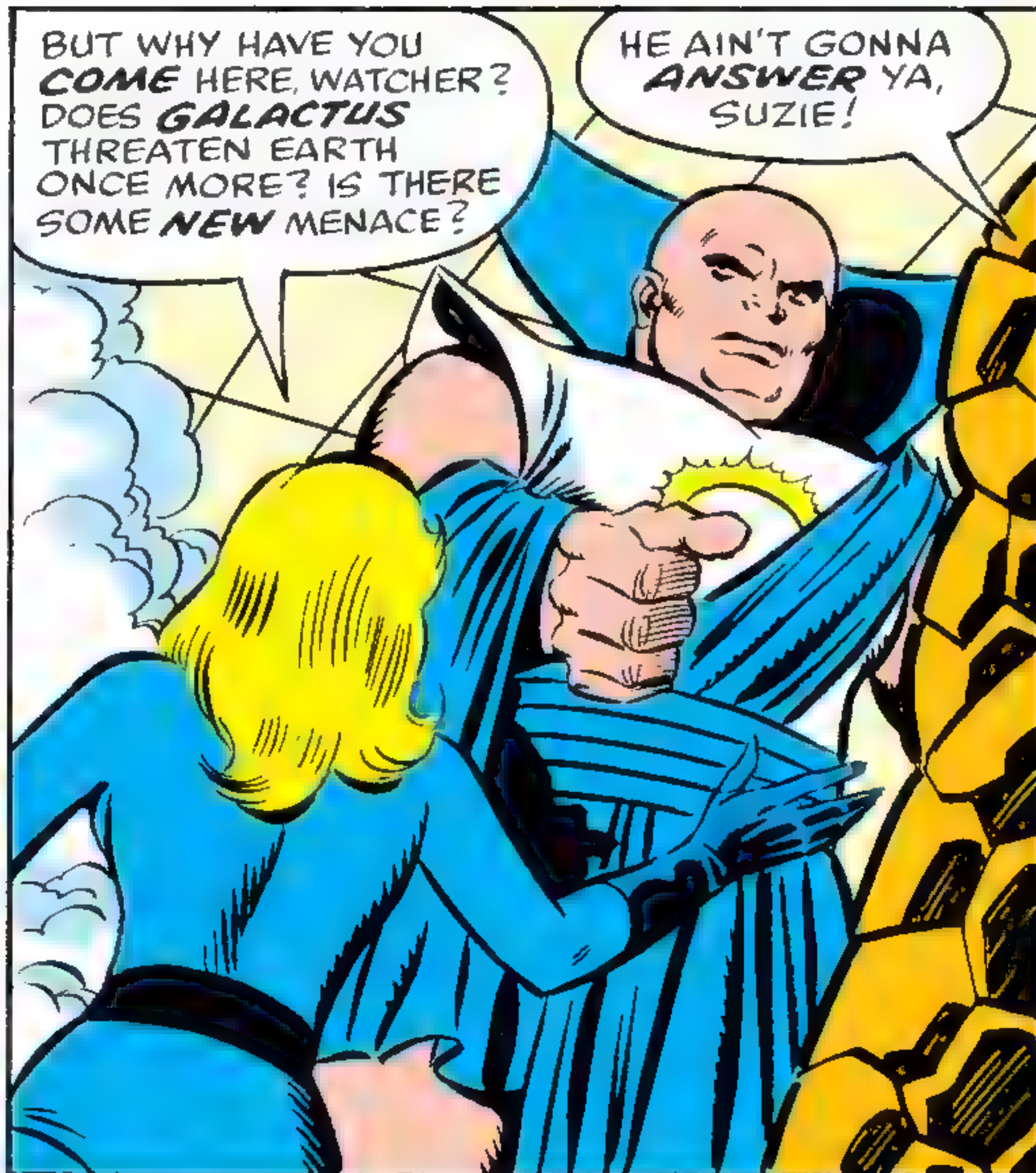




OH, **NOW** I RECOGNIZE HIM! HE APPEARED ON **POPPUP** ONCE! HE JUST STOOD AROUND ALL DAY AND **STARED** AT US!

HE WAS ABSOLUTELY **NO FUN** AT ALL!

LOOK WHO'S **TALKIN'**!



BUT WHY HAVE YOU **COME** HERE, WATCHER? DOES **GALACTUS** THREATEN EARTH ONCE MORE? IS THERE SOME **NEW** MENACE?

HE AIN'T GONNA **ANSWER** YA, SUZIE!



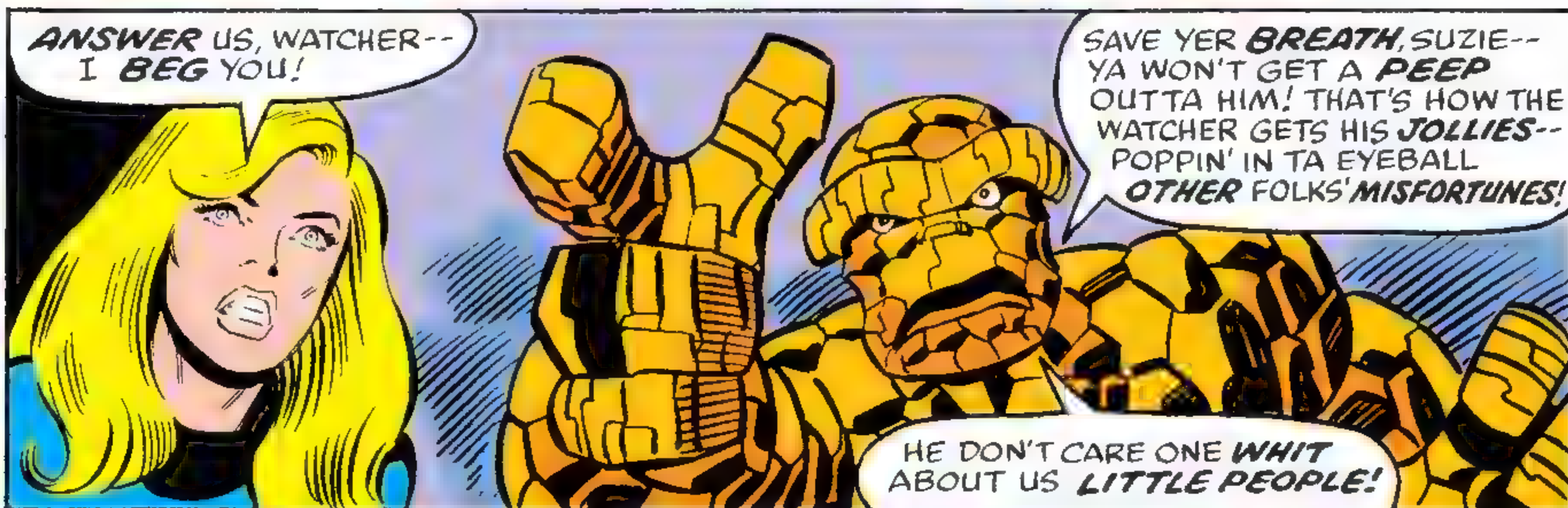
WHAT DO YOU **MEAN** HE WON'T ANSWER? IF HE'S COME HERE TO **WITNESS** SOMETHING THAT SOMEHOW AFFECTS **US**, HE HAS NO **RIGHT** TO KEEP **SILENT**!

TALK TO US, WATCHER! TELL US YOUR **MISSION** HERE!!



BUT, SILENTLY, THE ALL-SEEING ALIEN GLANCES DOWN AT THE IRATE INVISIBLE GIRL...

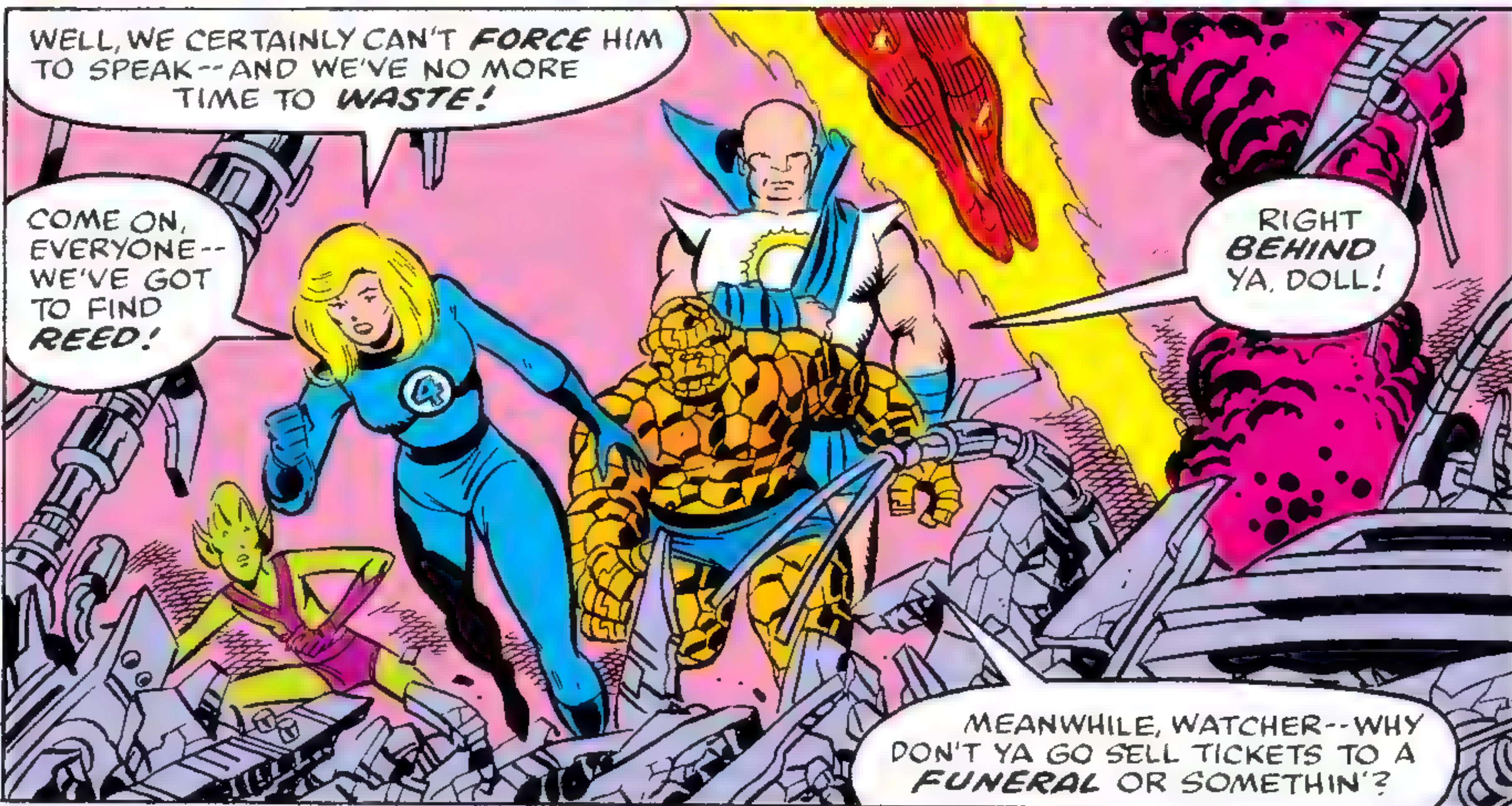
...AND SADLY SHAKES HIS HEAD!



ANSWER US, WATCHER-- I **BEG** YOU!

SAVE YER **BREATH**, SUZIE-- YA WON'T GET A **PEEP** OUTTA HIM! THAT'S HOW THE WATCHER GETS HIS **JOLLIES**-- POPPIN' IN TA EYEBALL **OTHER** FOLKS' MISFORTUNES!

HE DON'T CARE ONE **WHIT** ABOUT US **LITTLE** PEOPLE!

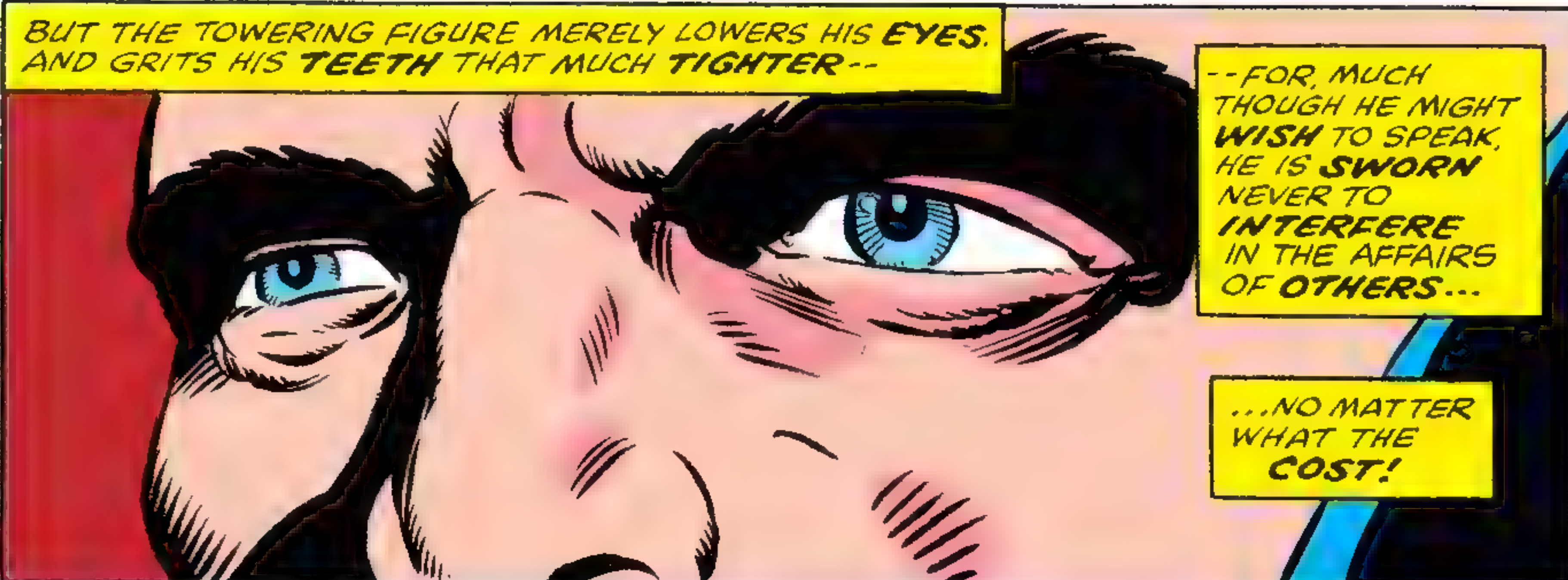


WELL, WE CERTAINLY CAN'T **FORCE** HIM TO SPEAK--AND WE'VE NO MORE TIME TO **WASTE**!

COME ON, EVERYONE-- WE'VE GOT TO FIND **REED**!

RIGHT **BEHIND** YA, DOLL!

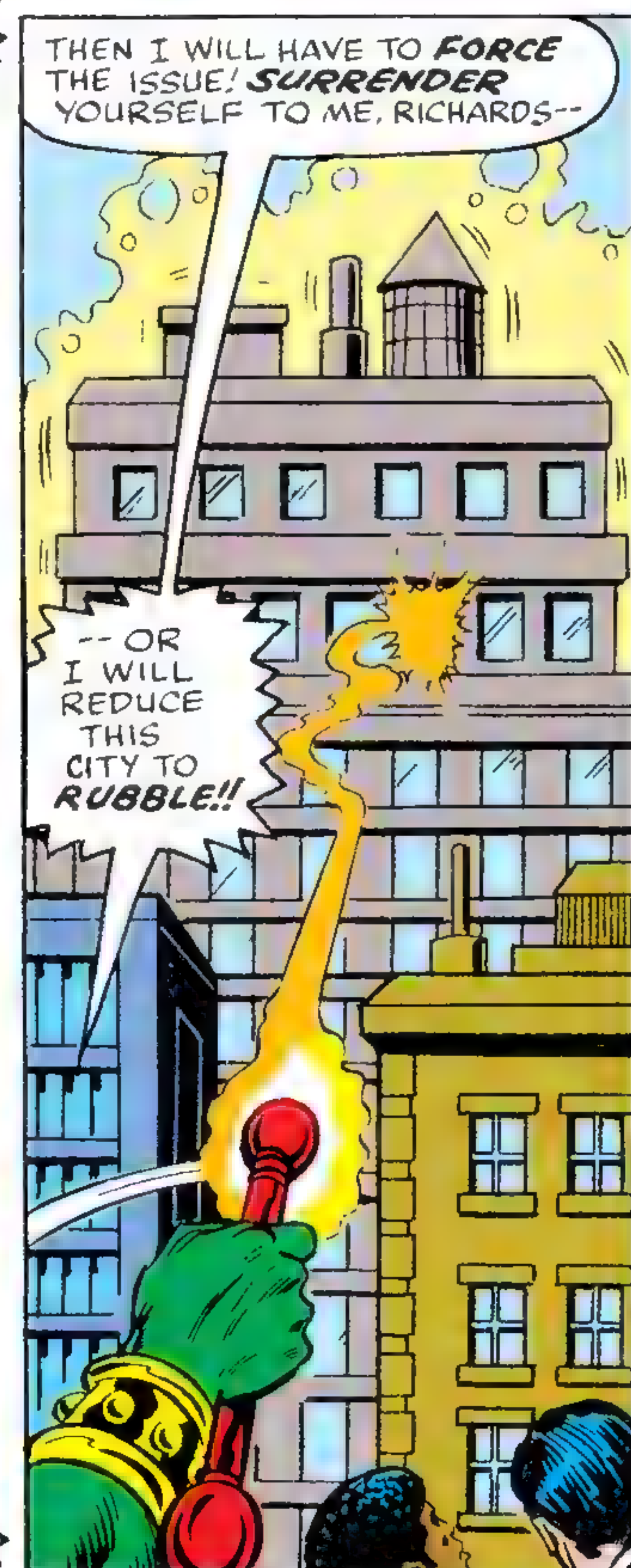
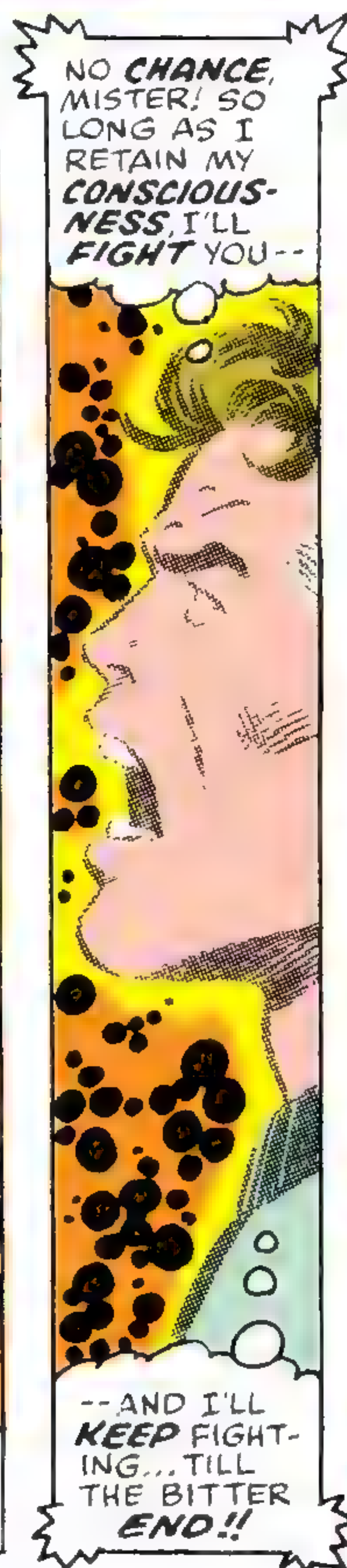
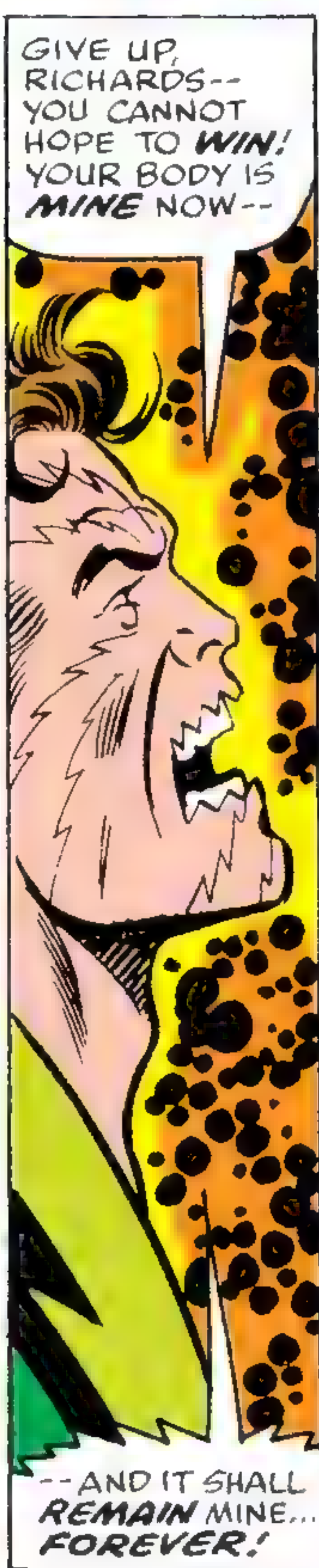
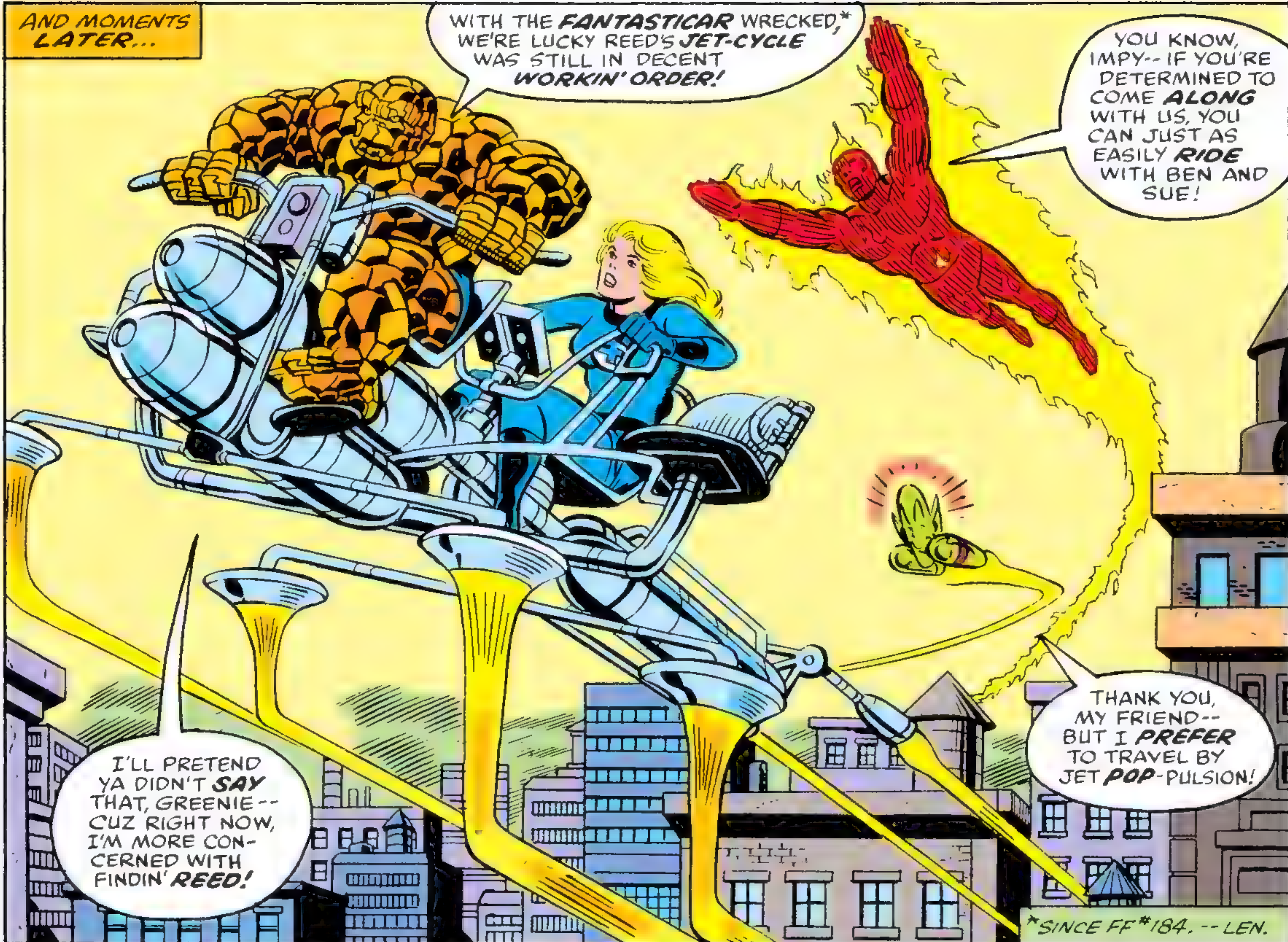
MEANWHILE, WATCHER-- WHY DON'T YA GO SELL TICKETS TO A **FUNERAL** OR SOMETHIN'?



BUT THE TOWERING FIGURE MERELY LOWERS HIS EYES, AND GRITS HIS **TEETH** THAT MUCH **TIGHTER**--

--FOR, MUCH THOUGH HE MIGHT **WISH** TO SPEAK, HE IS **SWORN** NEVER TO **INTERFERE** IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS...

...NO MATTER WHAT THE **COST**!



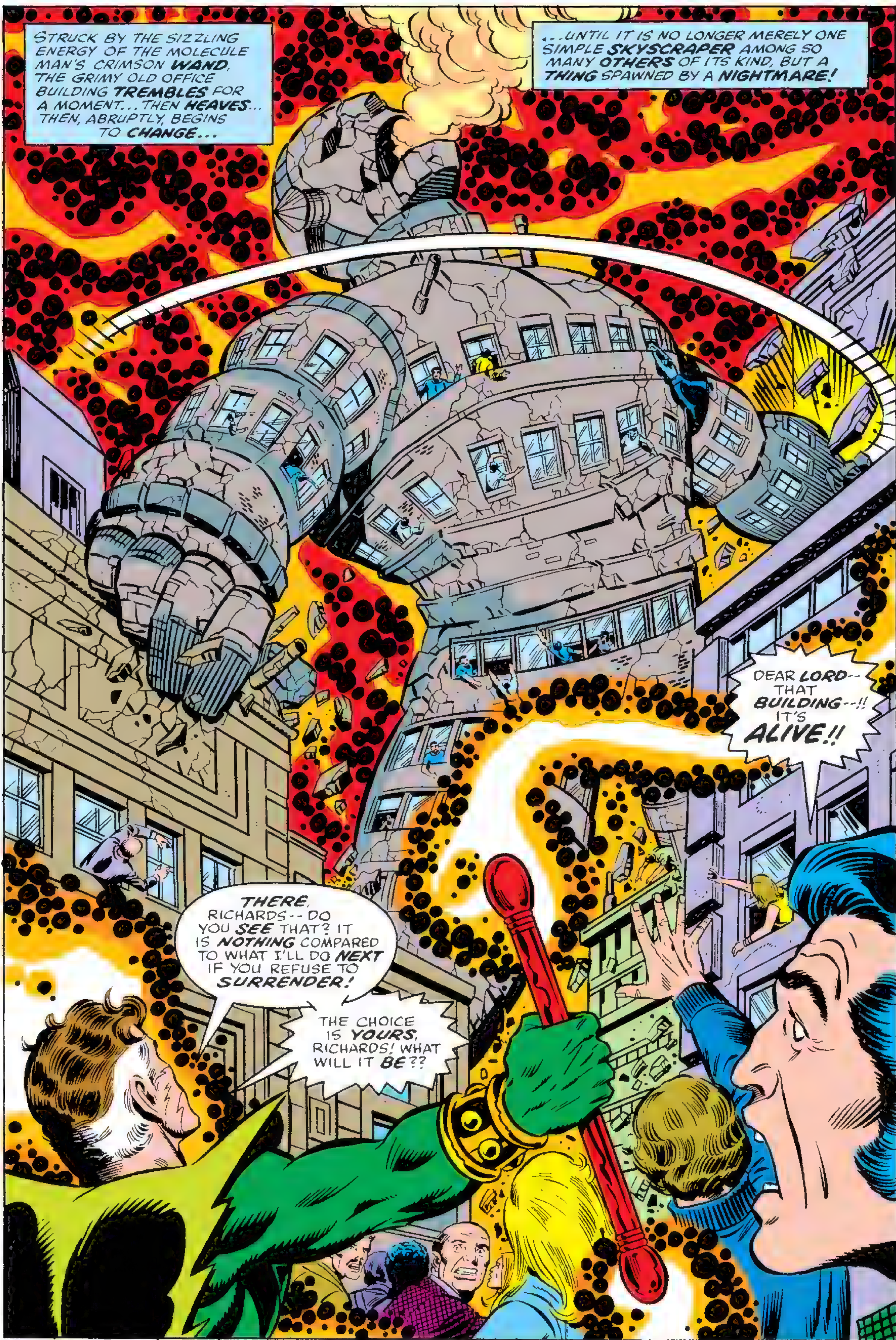
STRUCK BY THE SIZZLING
ENERGY OF THE MOLECULE
MAN'S CRIMSON **WAND**,
THE GRIMY OLD OFFICE
BUILDING **TREMLES** FOR
A MOMENT... THEN **HEAVES**...
THEN, ABRUPTLY, BEGINS
TO **CHANGE**...

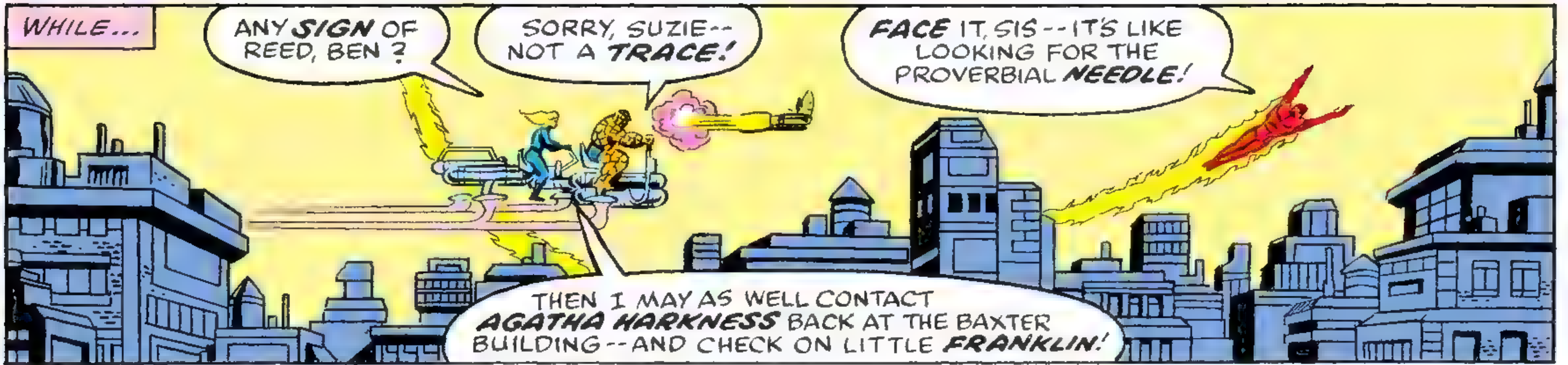
...UNTIL IT IS NO LONGER MERELY ONE
SIMPLE **SKYSCRAPER** AMONG SO
MANY **OTHERS** OF ITS KIND, BUT A
THING SPAWNED BY A **NIGHTMARE**!

DEAR LORD--
THAT
BUILDING--!!
IT'S
ALIVE!!

THERE,
RICHARDS-- DO
YOU **SEE** THAT? IT
IS **NOTHING** COMPARED
TO WHAT I'LL DO **NEXT**
IF YOU REFUSE TO
SURRENDER!

THE CHOICE
IS **YOURS**,
RICHARDS! WHAT
WILL IT **BE??**





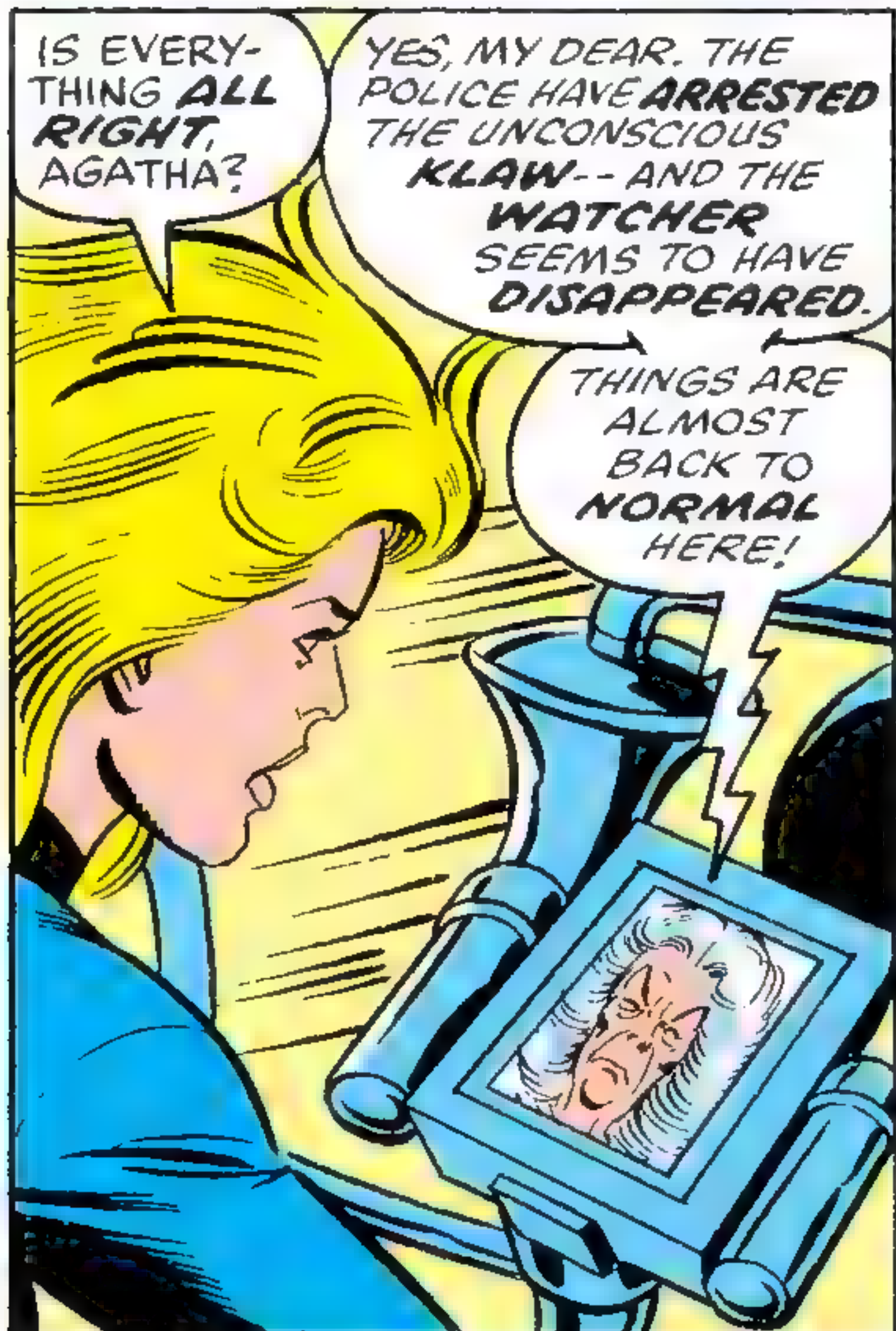
WHILE...

ANY **SIGN** OF REED, BEN?

SORRY, SUZIE-- NOT A **TRACE!**

FACE IT, SIS--IT'S LIKE LOOKING FOR THE PROVERBIAL **NEEDLE!**

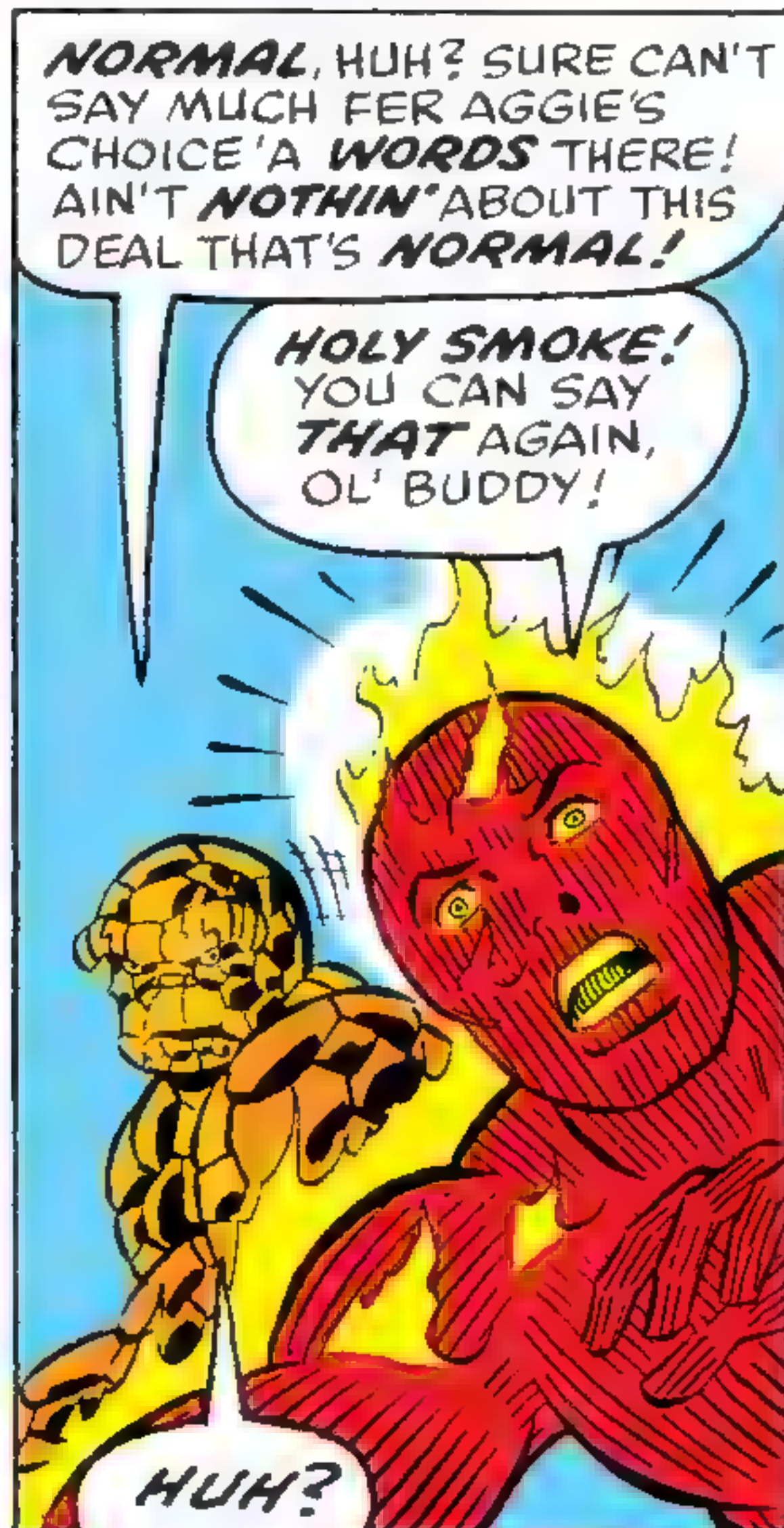
THEN I MAY AS WELL CONTACT **AGATHA HARKNESS** BACK AT THE BAXTER BUILDING--AND CHECK ON LITTLE **FRANKLIN!**



IS EVERY-
THING **ALL**
RIGHT,
AGATHA?

YES, MY DEAR. THE
POLICE HAVE **ARRESTED**
THE UNCONSCIOUS
KLAW-- AND THE
WATCHER
SEEMS TO HAVE
DISAPPEARED.

THINGS ARE
ALMOST
BACK TO
NORMAL
HERE!



NORMAL, HUH? SURE CAN'T
SAY MUCH FER AGGIE'S
CHOICE 'A **WORDS** THERE!
AIN'T **NOTHIN'** ABOUT THIS
DEAL THAT'S **NORMAL!**

HOLY SMOKE!
YOU CAN SAY
THAT AGAIN,
OL' BUDDY!

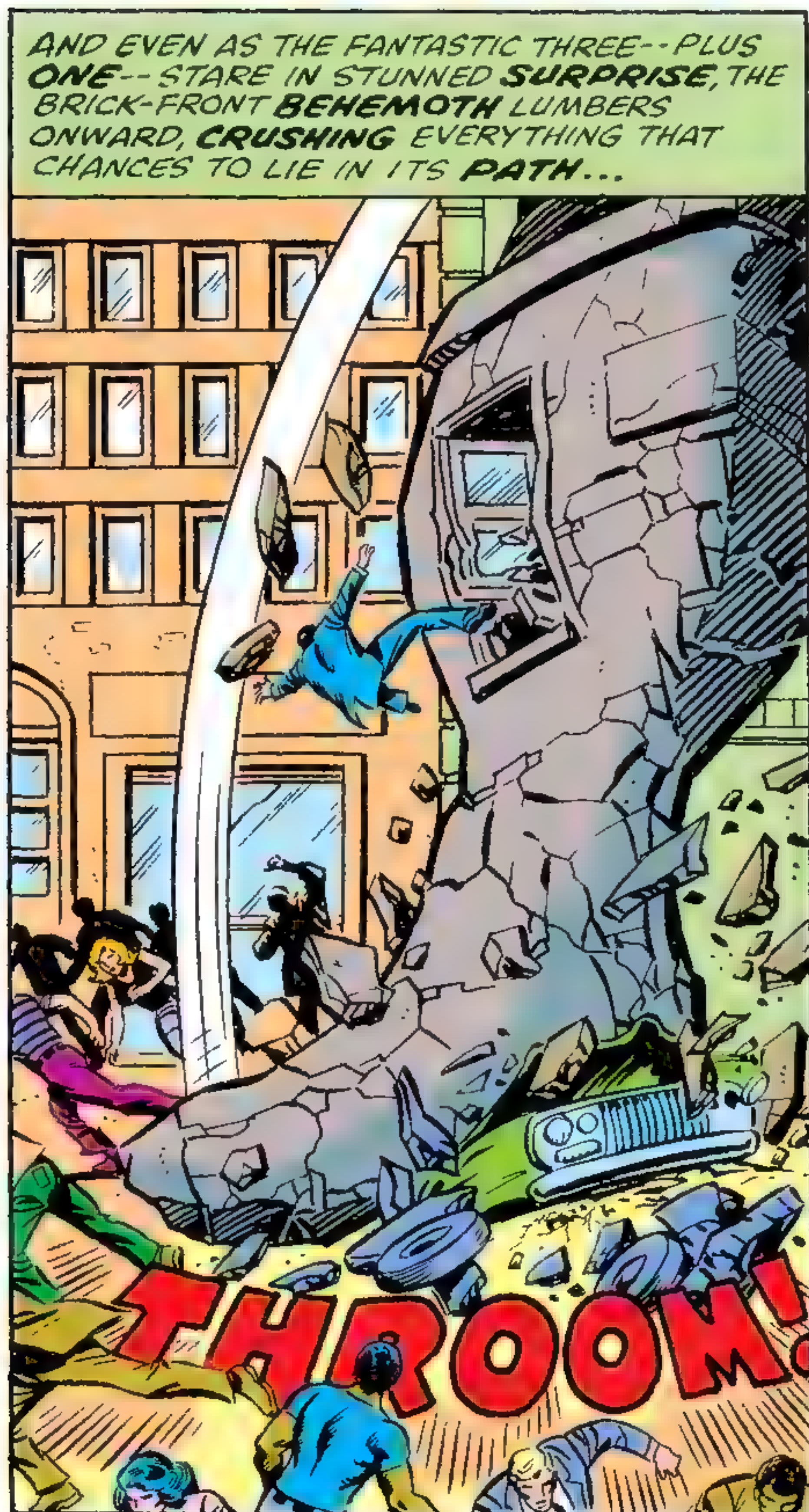
HUH?



UNLESS I'M GROWING
CROSS-EYED, BENJY--
I'D SWEAR THAT'S A
BUILDING RUNNING
AMUCK DOWN THERE!

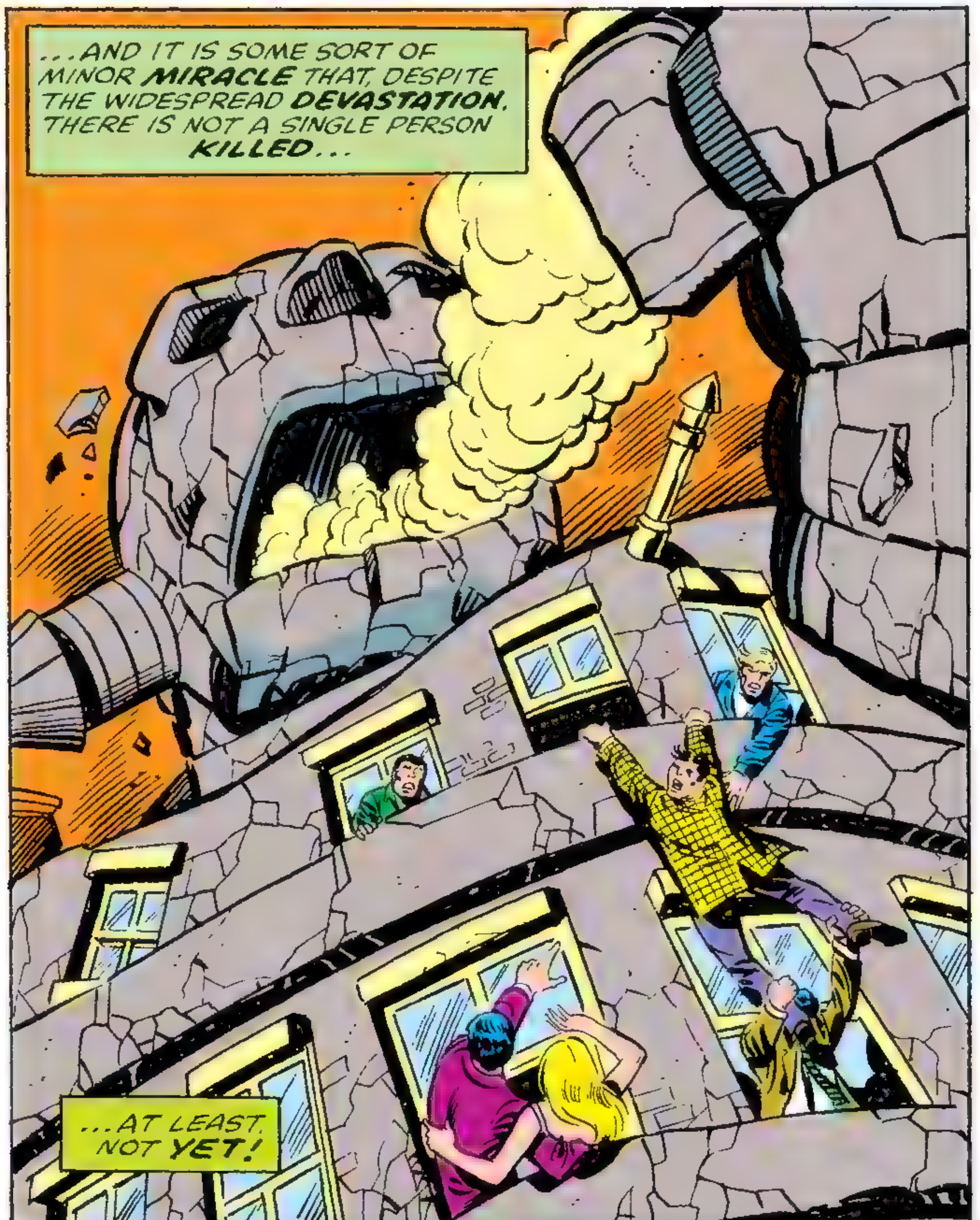
I THINK YA
FINALLY BOILED
YER **BRAIN**,
HOTSHOT! WHO-
EVER HEARDA...

YIKES!
YER
RIGHT!



AND EVEN AS THE FANTASTIC THREE-- PLUS
ONE-- STARE IN STUNNED **SURPRISE**, THE
BRICK-FRONT **BEHEMOTH** LUMBERS
ONWARD, **CRUSHING** EVERYTHING THAT
CHANCES TO LIE IN ITS **PATH...**

THROOM!



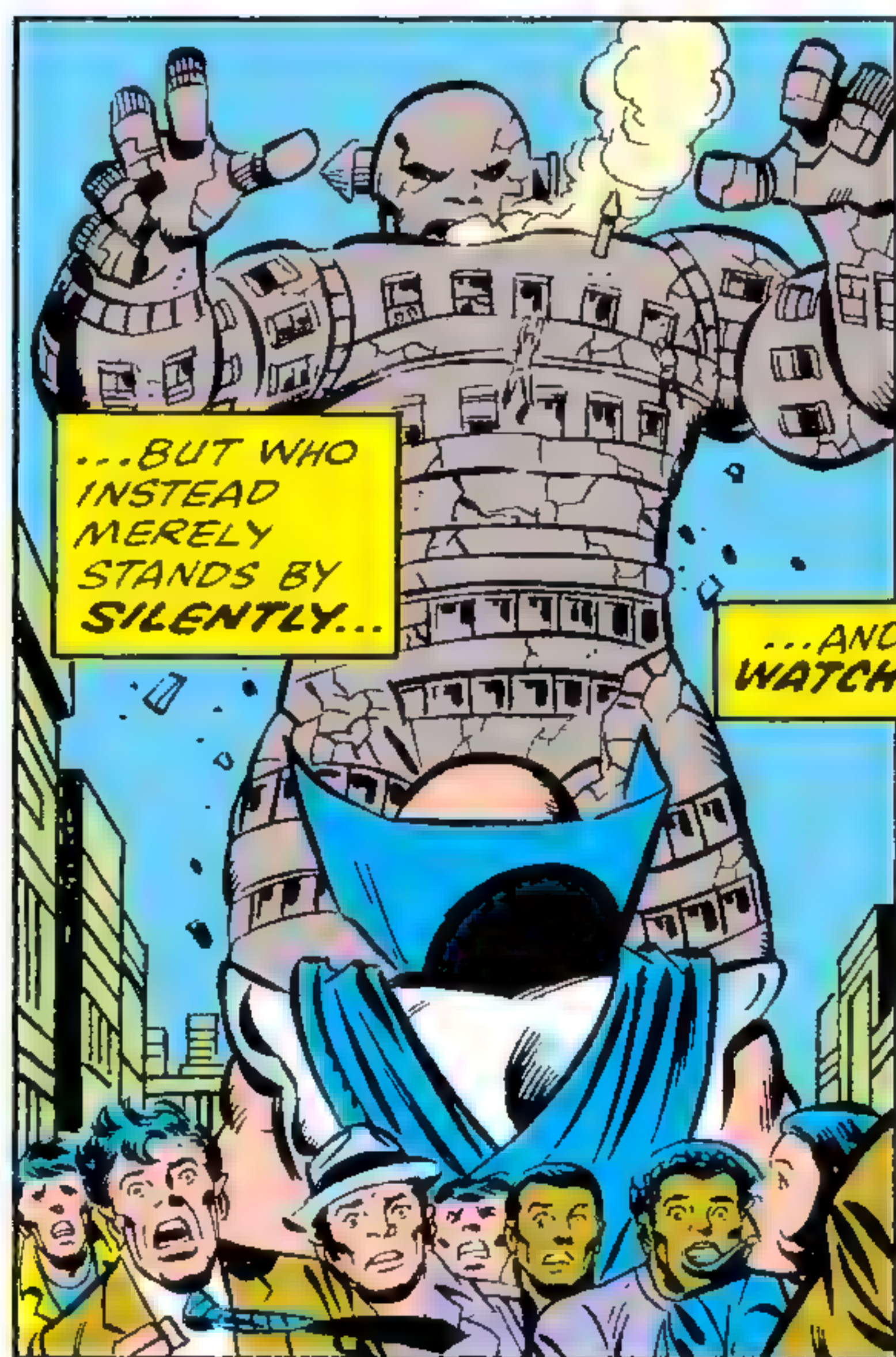
...AND IT IS SOME SORT OF
MINOR **MIRACLE** THAT, DESPITE
THE WIDESPREAD **DEVASTATION**,
THERE IS NOT A SINGLE PERSON
KILLED...

...AT LEAST,
NOT YET!

IN BLIND **PANIC**, THE TERRIFIED PASSERSBY RACE **AWAY** FROM THE TOWERING **SKYSCRAPER MAN**.
OBLIVIOUS TO THE EQUALLY-ALIEN BEING WHO STANDS **AMONG** THEM...



...A BEING WHO COULD
HALT THE CONCRETE
CREATURE'S RAMPAGE
WITH BUT A **GESTURE**,
IF HE WAS **ALLOWED**
TO...



...BUT WHO
INSTEAD
MERELY
STANDS BY
SILENTLY...

...AND
WATCHES!

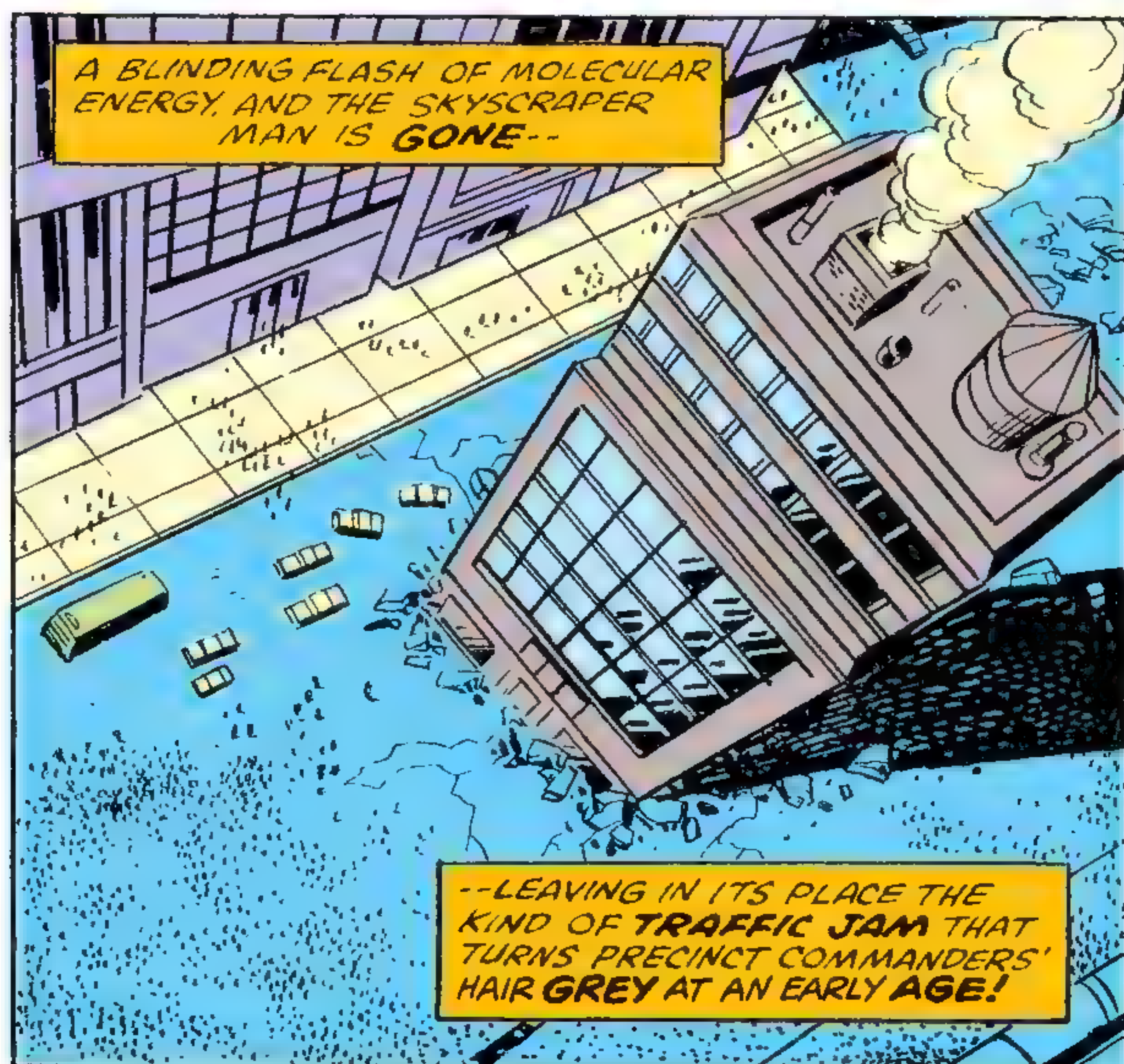
ALL RIGHT, MOLECULE MAN, YOU
WIN... FOR THE **MOMENT**! I WON'T
FIGHT YOU ANY LONGER!

NOW PUT A **STOP**
TO THIS MADNESS...
IMMEDIATELY!



IF YOU
INSIST,
RICHARDS!

BUT I ADVISE YOU TO REMEMBER
THAT, SO LONG AS I POSSESS
TOTAL **MASTERY** OVER ALL
MOLECULES, YOU **DEFY** ME
AT YOUR **PERIL!**



A BLINDING FLASH OF MOLECULAR
ENERGY, AND THE SKYSCRAPER
MAN IS **GONE**--

--LEAVING IN ITS PLACE THE
KIND OF **TRAFFIC JAM** THAT
TURNS PRECINCT COMMANDERS'
HAIR **GREY** AT AN EARLY AGE!

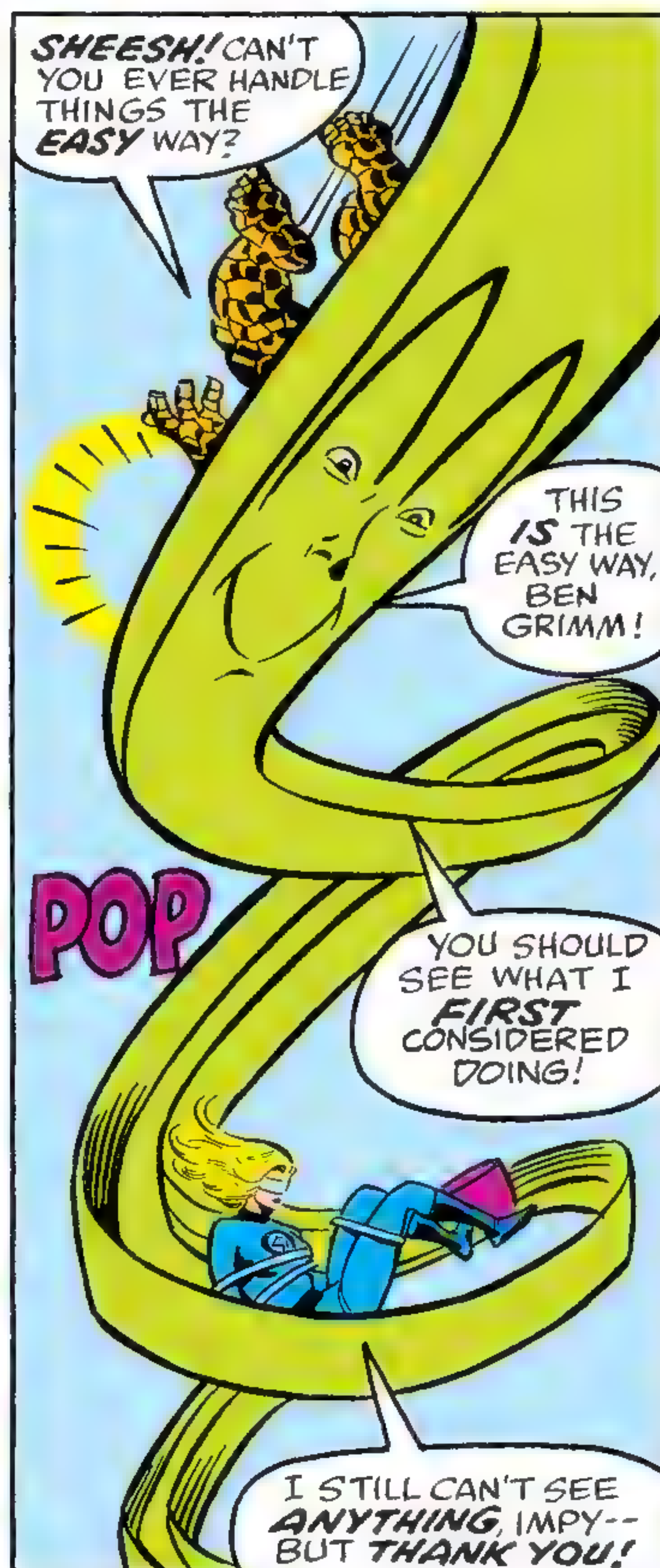
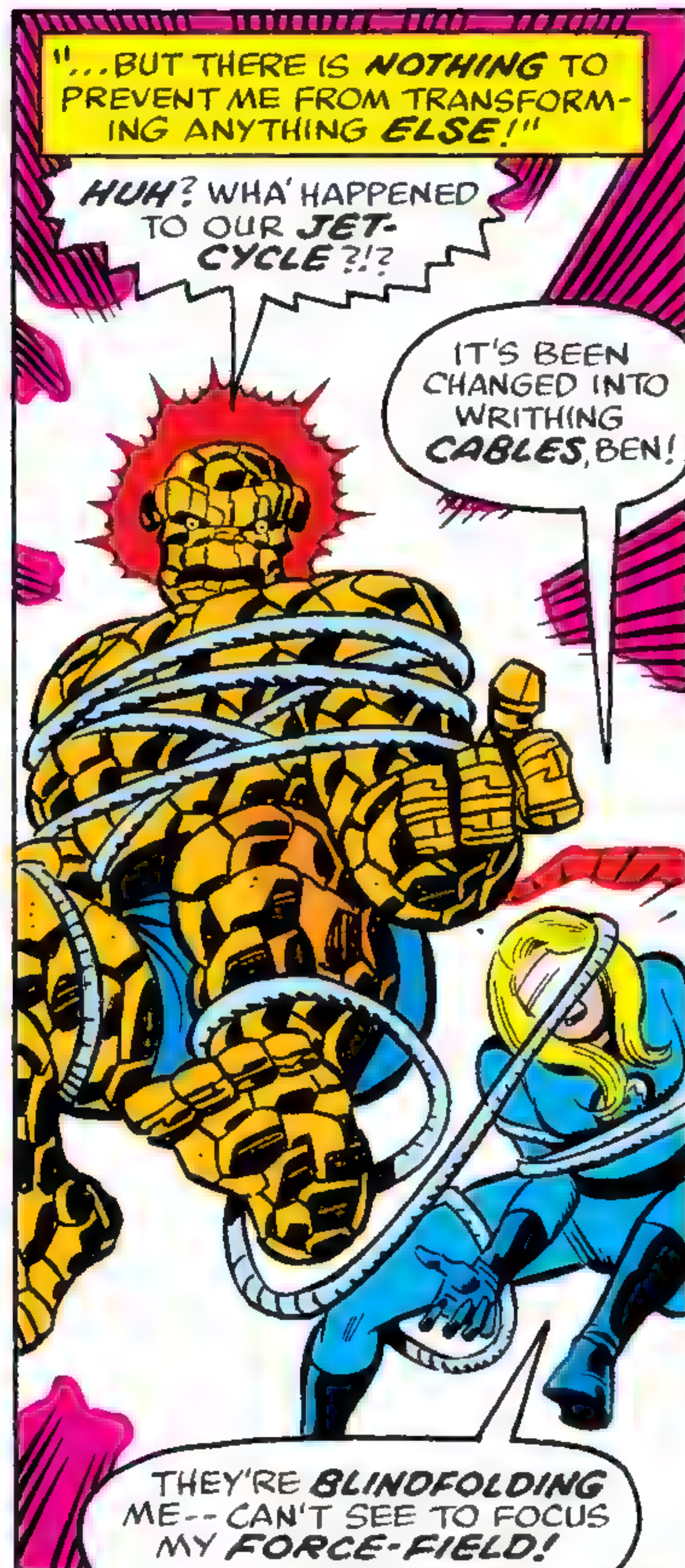
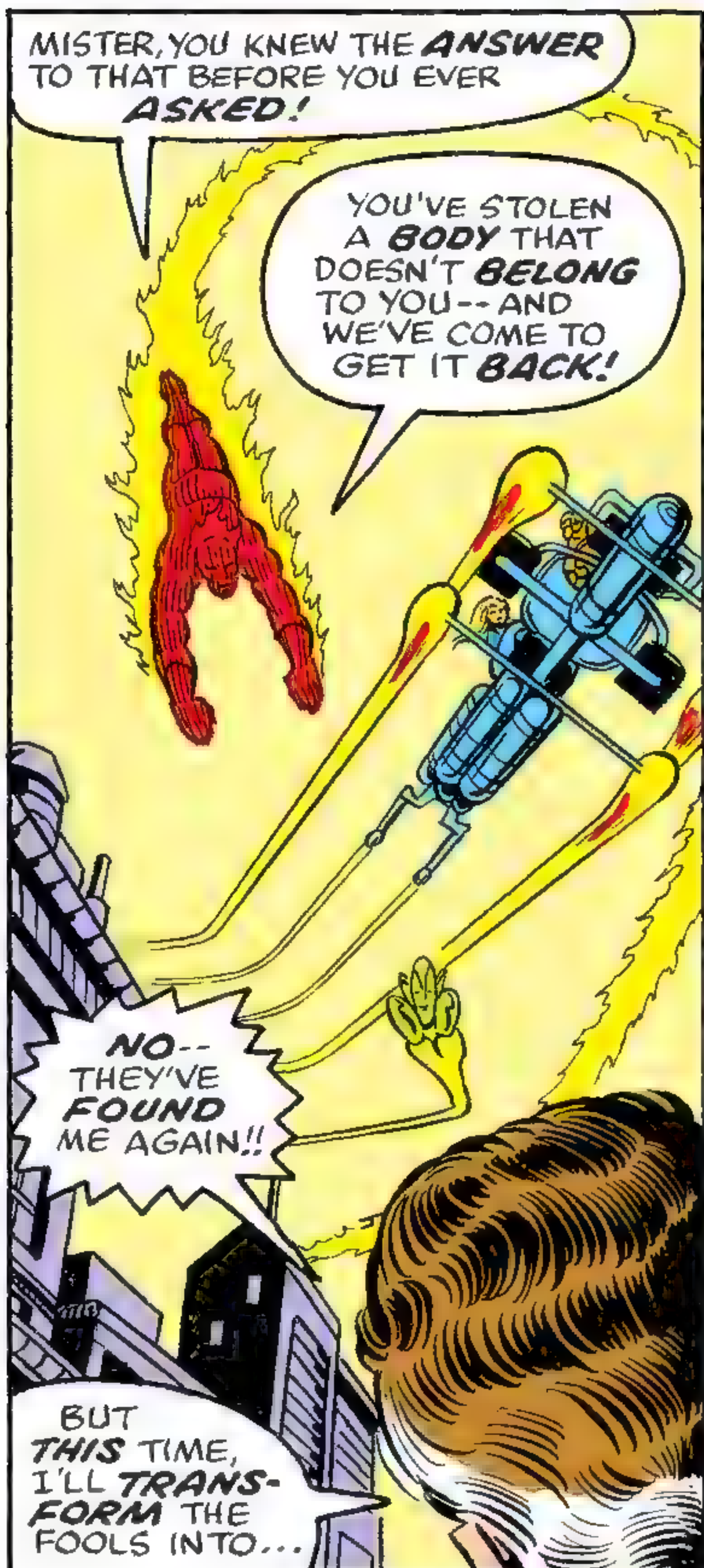
BUT MOMENTS
LATER...

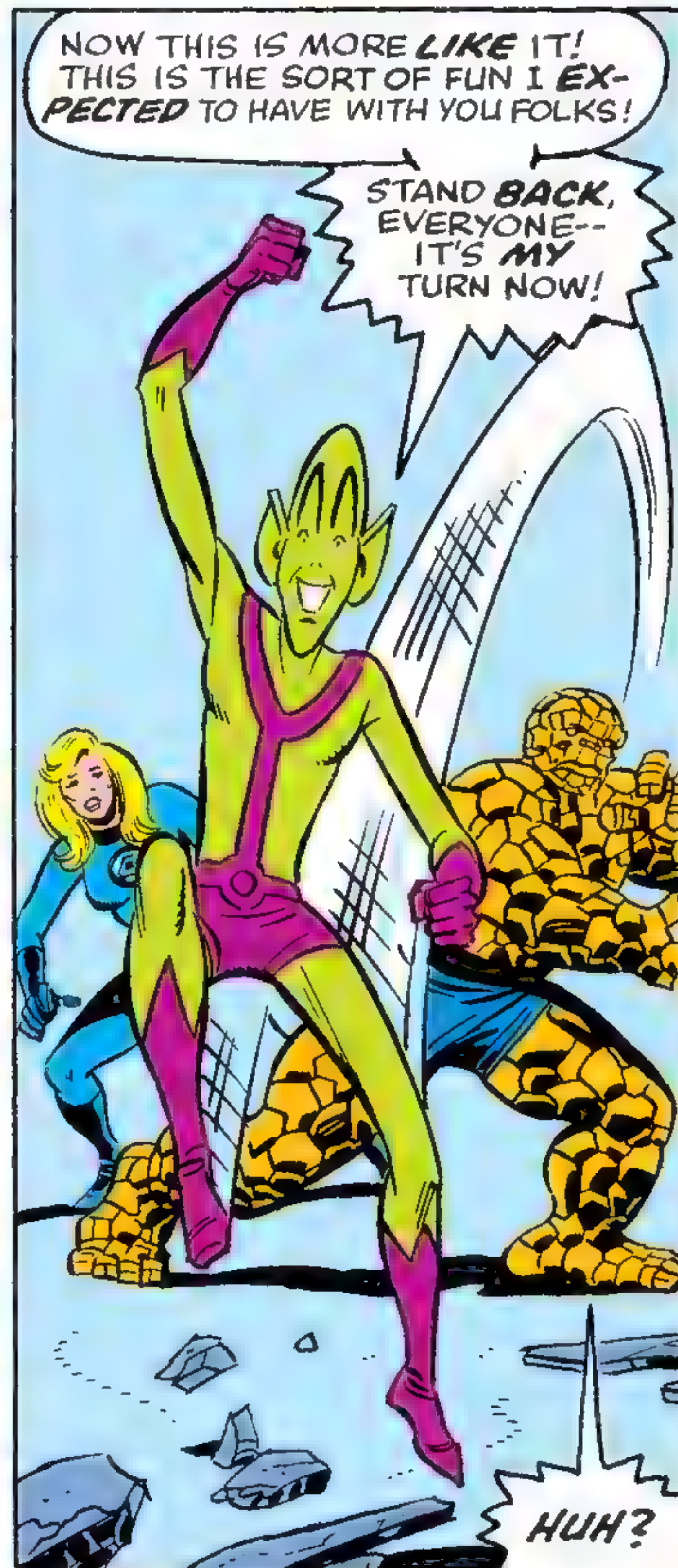
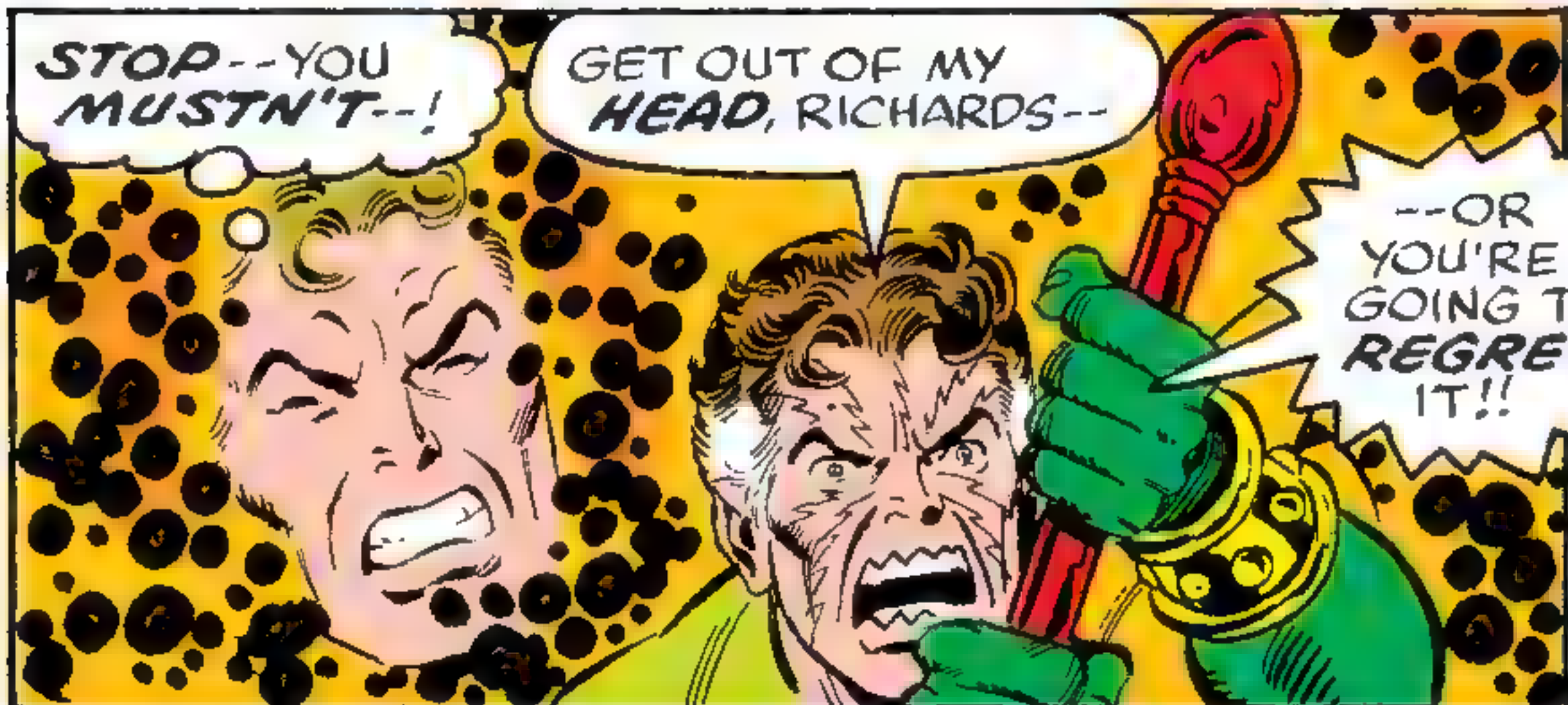
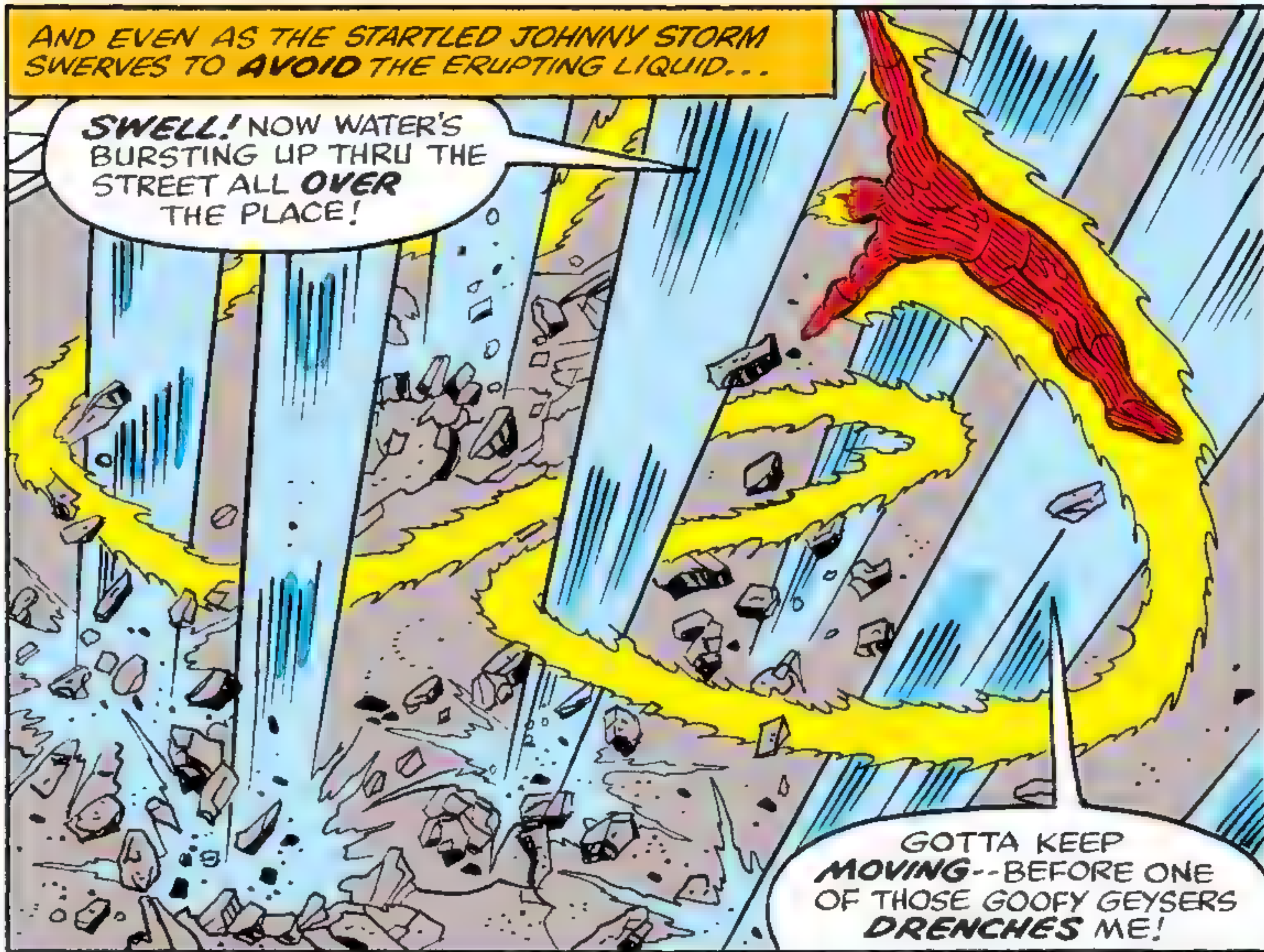
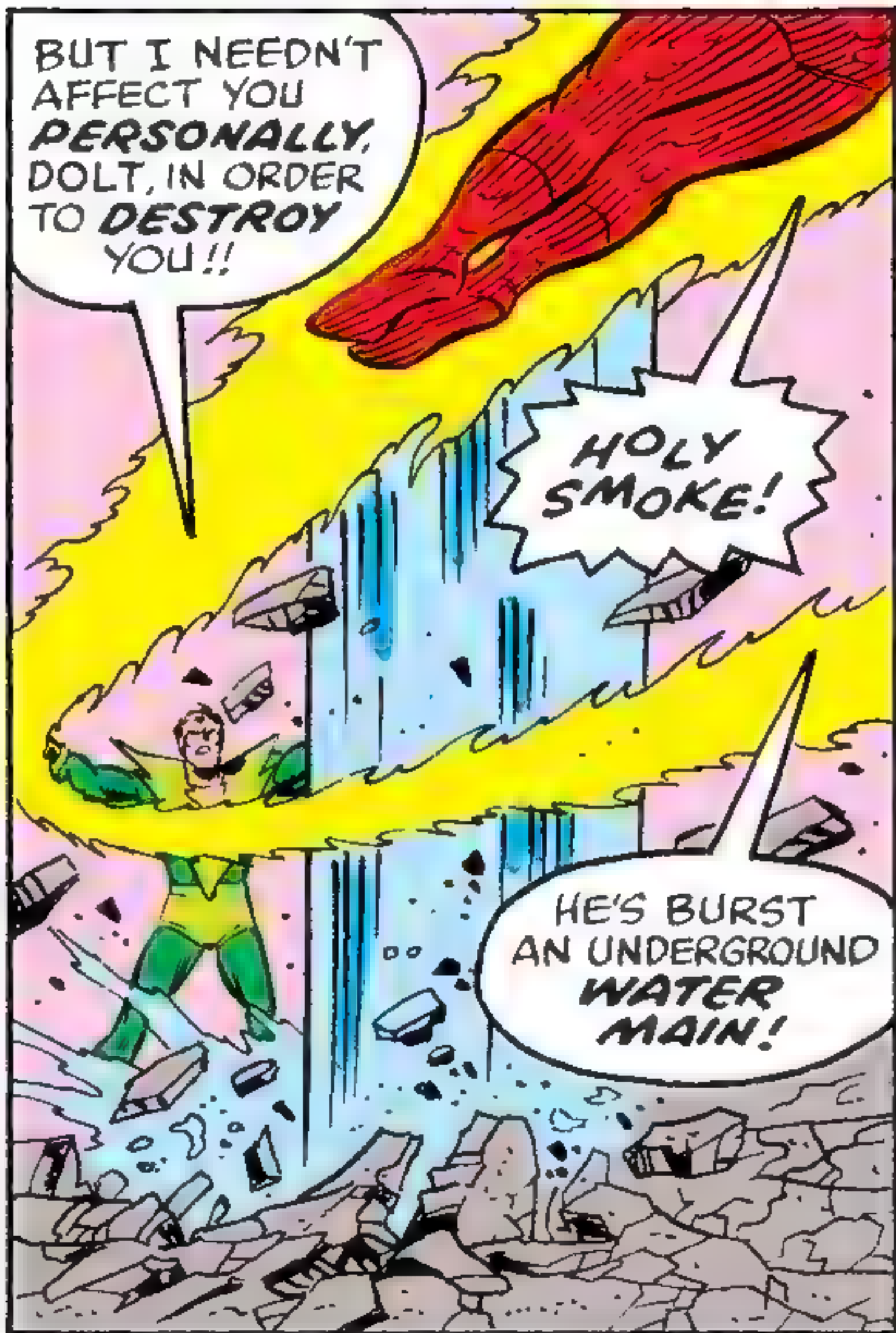


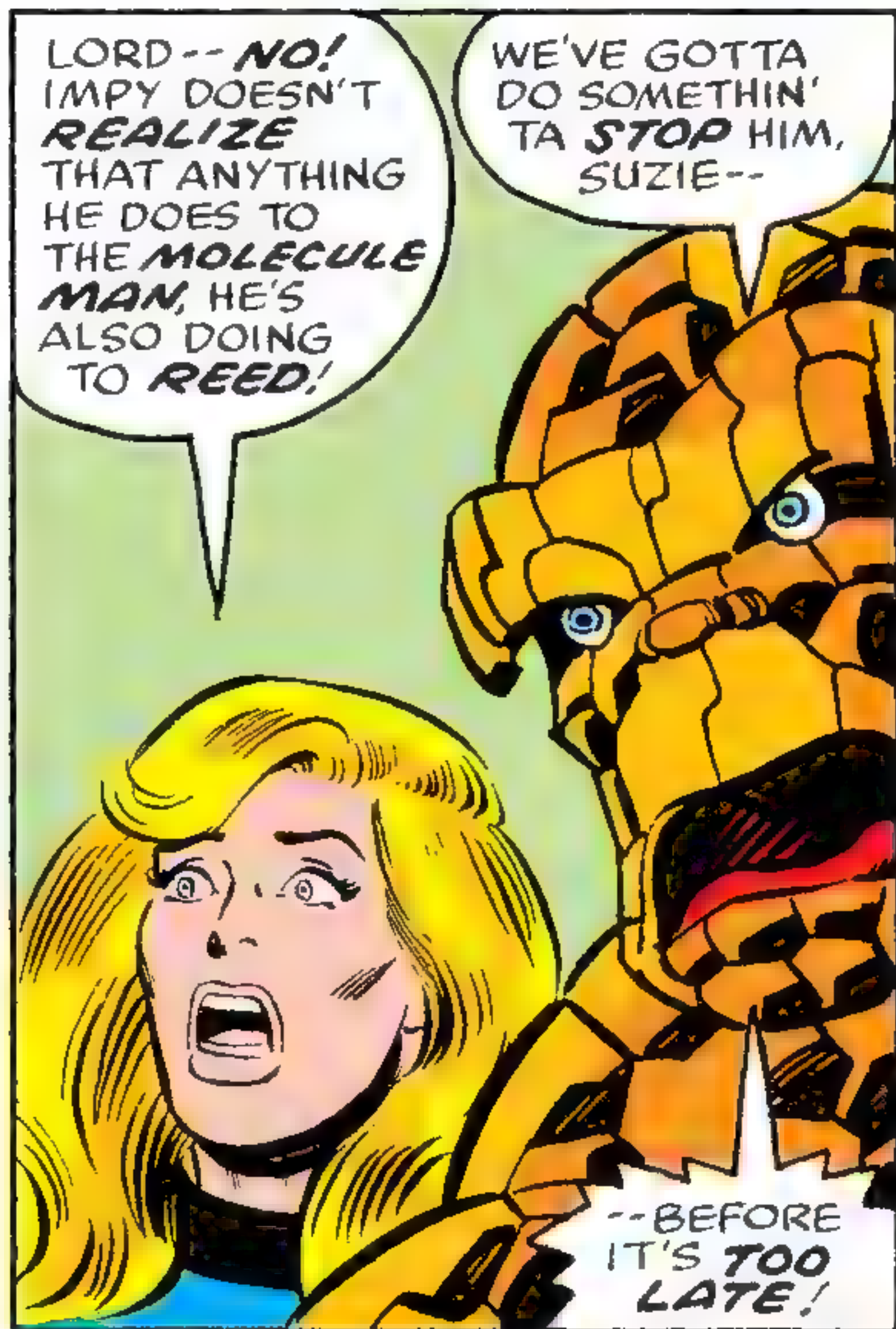
THERE! I HAVE RETURNED
THE OFFICE BUILDING WHERE
IT **BELONGS**, BUT I CAN
EASILY **ANIMATE**
IT AGAIN IF...

IF YER
STILL IN **ONE**
PIECE WHEN
WE'RE **DONE**
WITH YA,
MOLLY!

WHO--?!?



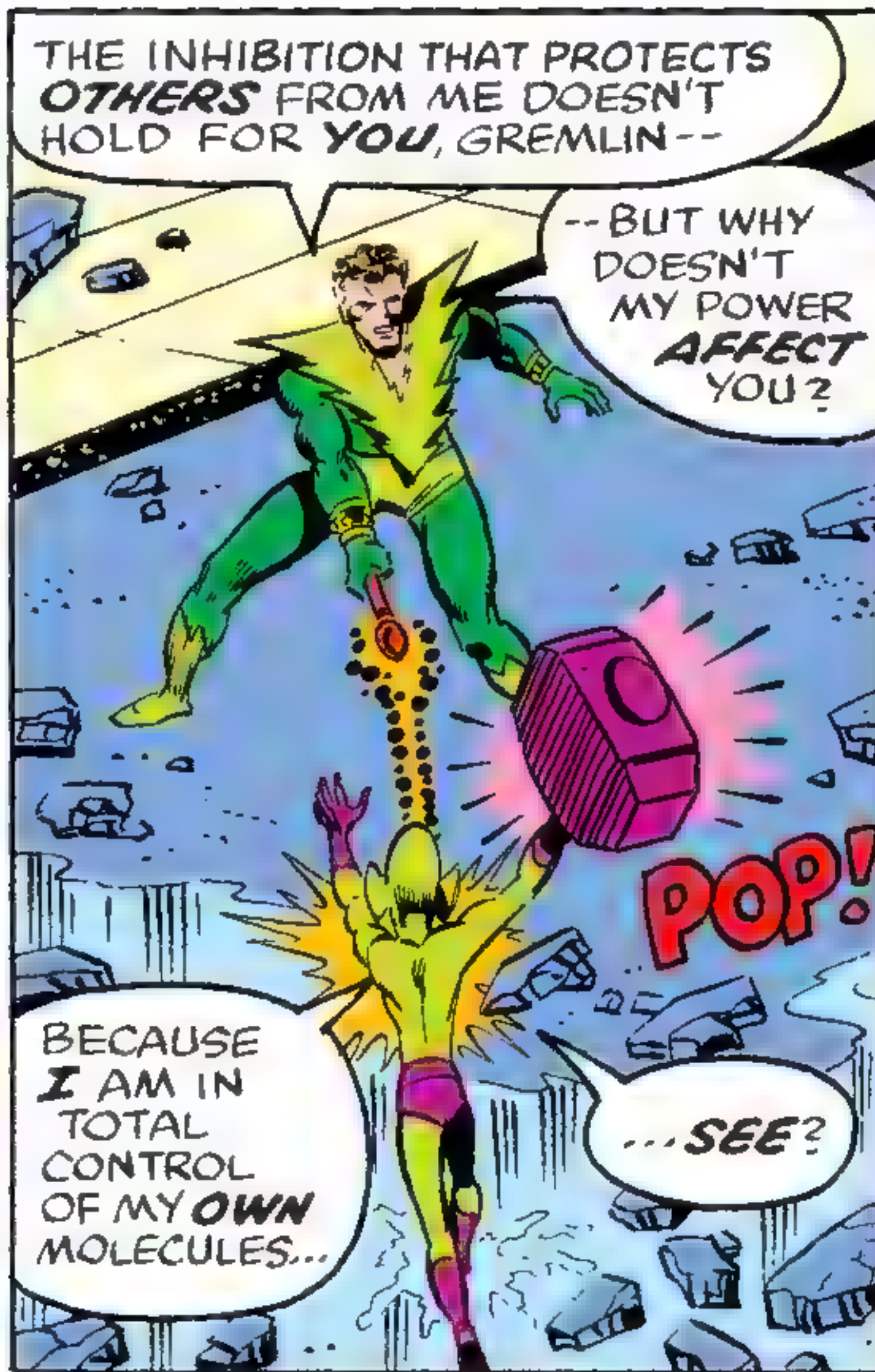




LORD -- **NO!** IMPY DOESN'T **REALIZE** THAT ANYTHING HE DOES TO THE **MOLECULE MAN**, HE'S ALSO DOING TO **REED!**

WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHIN' TA **STOP** HIM, SUZIE--

--BEFORE IT'S **TOO LATE!**



THE INHIBITION THAT PROTECTS **OTHERS** FROM ME DOESN'T HOLD FOR **YOU**, GREMLIN--

--BUT WHY DOESN'T MY POWER **AFFECT** YOU?

BECAUSE **I** AM IN TOTAL CONTROL OF MY **OWN** MOLECULES...

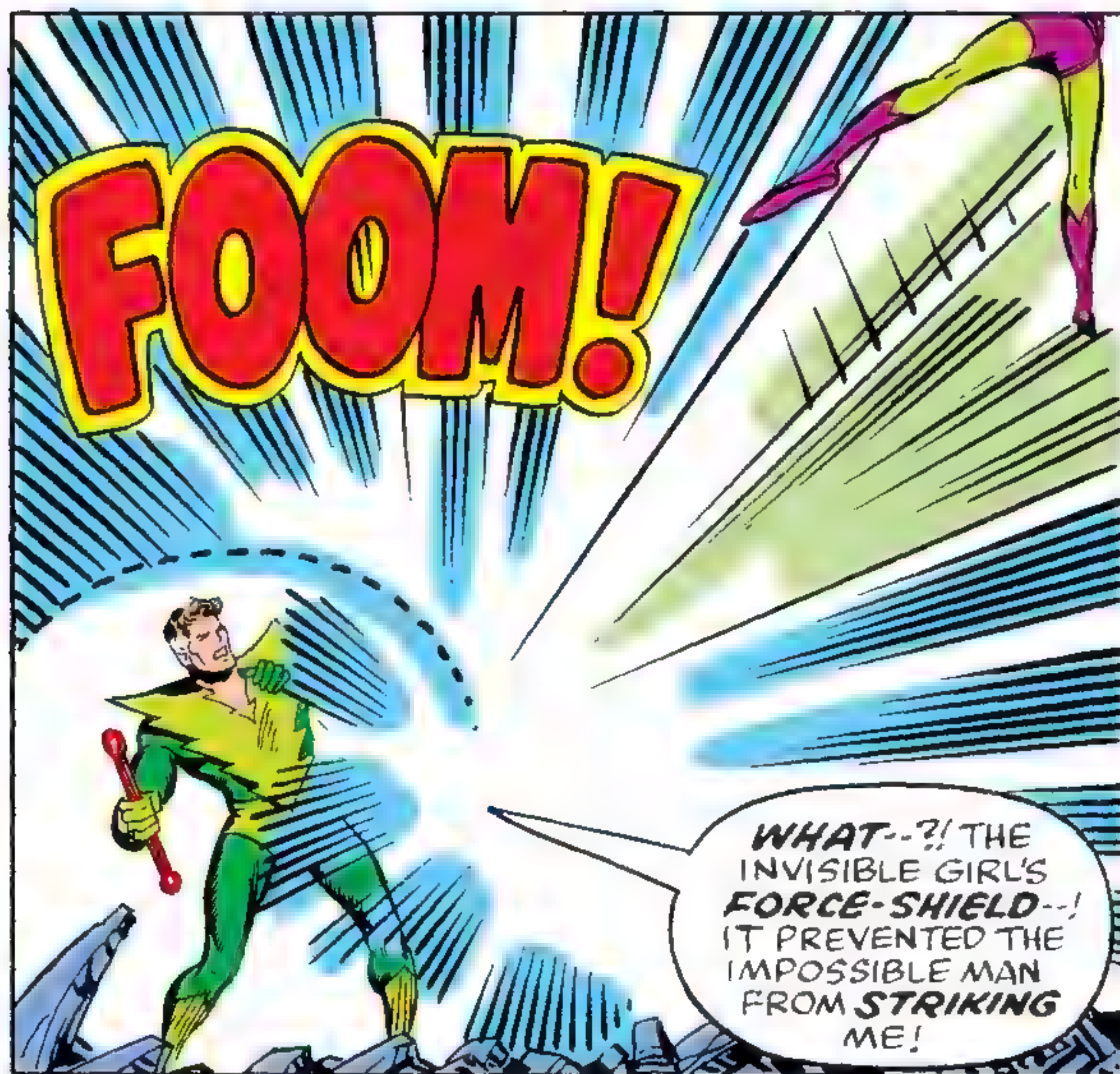
...SEE?

POP!



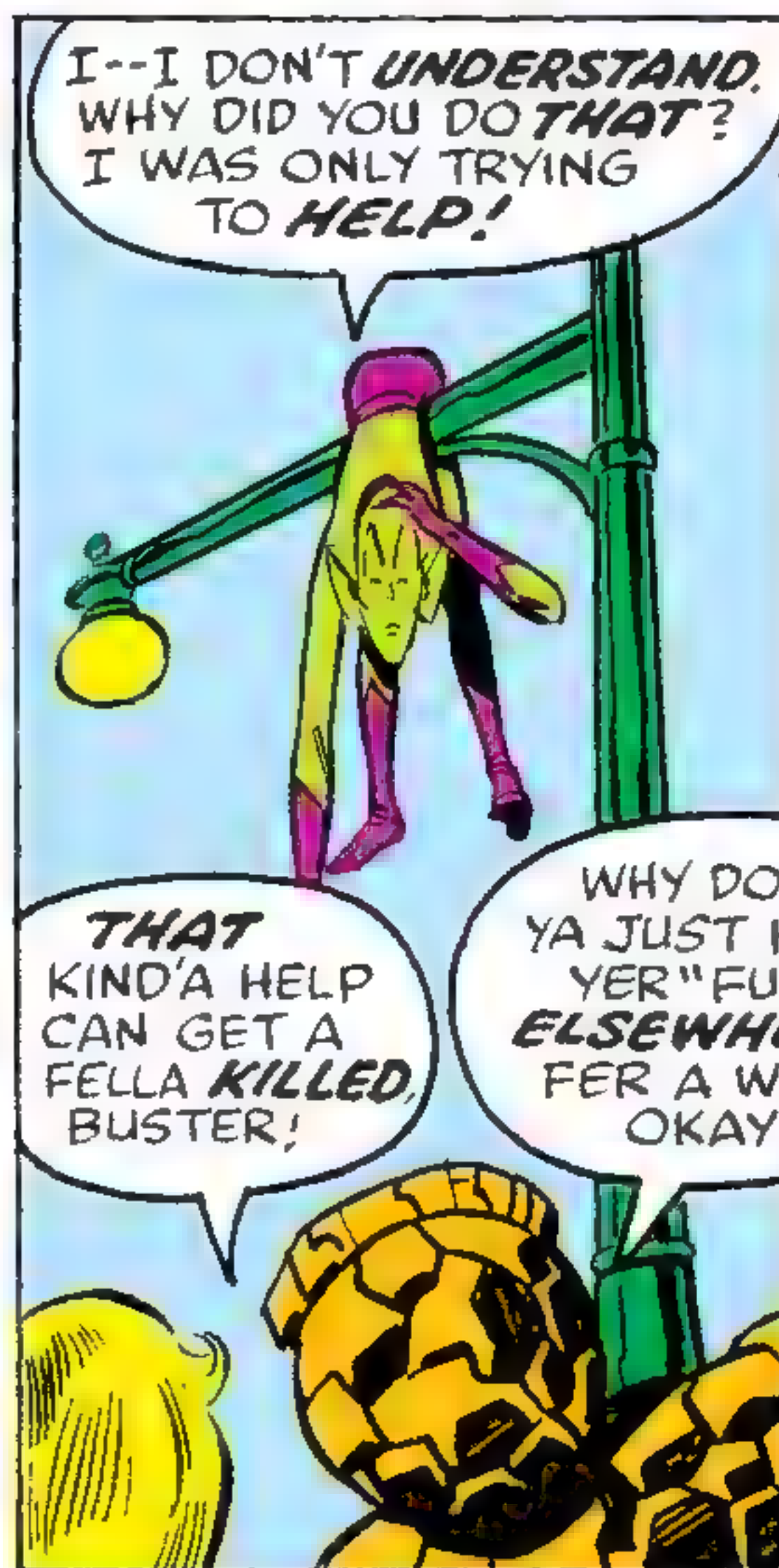
YES **INDEED!** THIS IS WHAT I **LIVE** FOR...

FUN! FUN! FUN!! FUN!!!



FOOM!

WHAT--?! THE INVISIBLE GIRL'S **FORCE-SHIELD**--! IT PREVENTED THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN FROM **STRIKING** ME!



I--I DON'T **UNDERSTAND**. WHY DID YOU DO **THAT**? I WAS ONLY TRYING TO **HELP!**

THAT KIND'A HELP CAN GET A FELLA **KILLED** BUSTER!

WHY DON'T YA JUST HAUL YER "**FUN**" **ELSEWHERE** FER A WHILE, OKAY?



SO **THAT'S** HOW IT IS, EH?

I GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF SAVING YOUR **LIVES**-- AND NOW YOU JUST WANT TO GET **RID** OF ME!



WELL, WE OF THE PLANET **POPPUP** KNOW HOW TO TAKE A **HINT!**

I'M CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO **STAY** WHERE I'M NOT **WANTED!**

I'M GOING TO FIND SOME-PLACE WHERE I CAN HAVE A **GOOD TIME!**



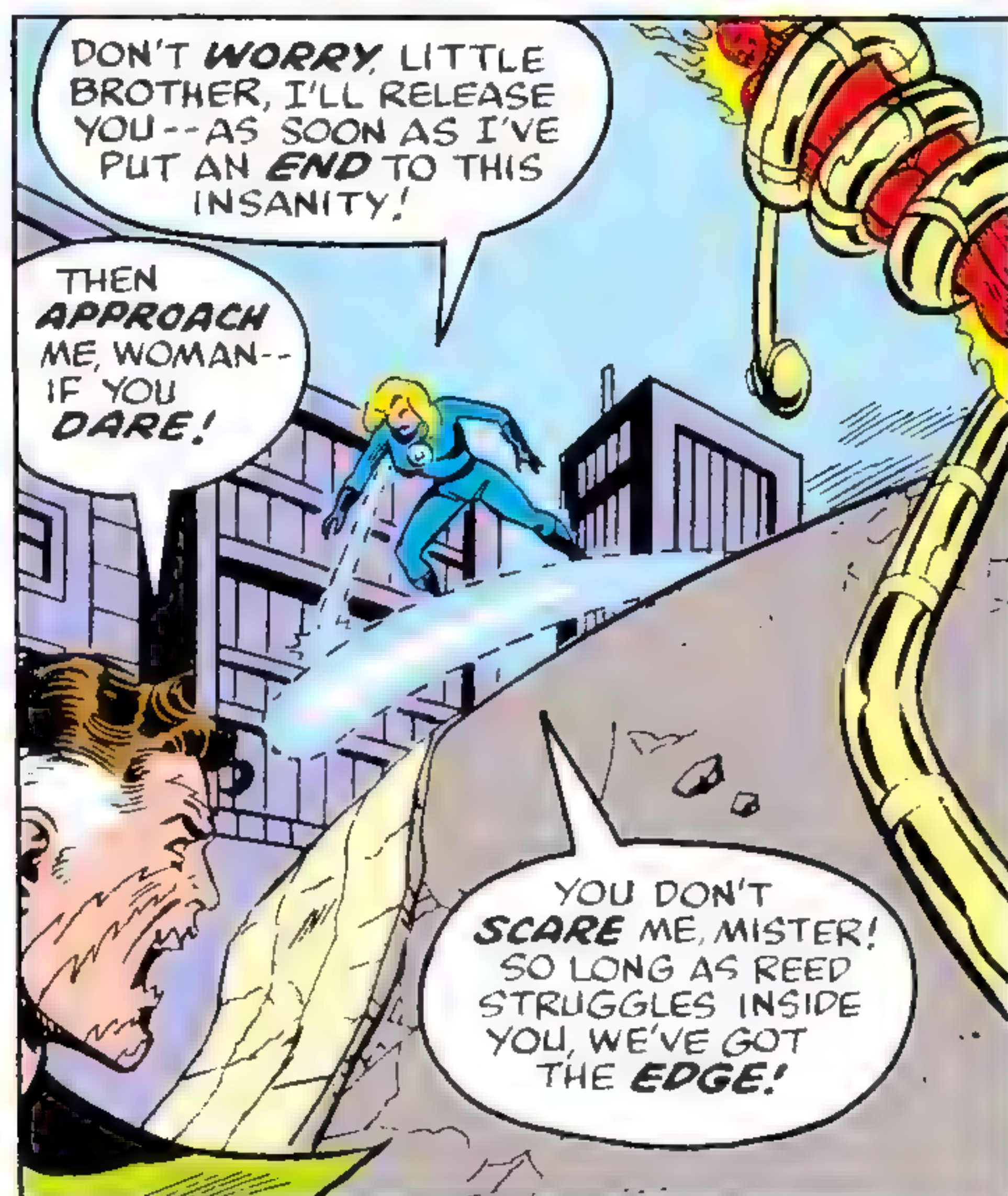
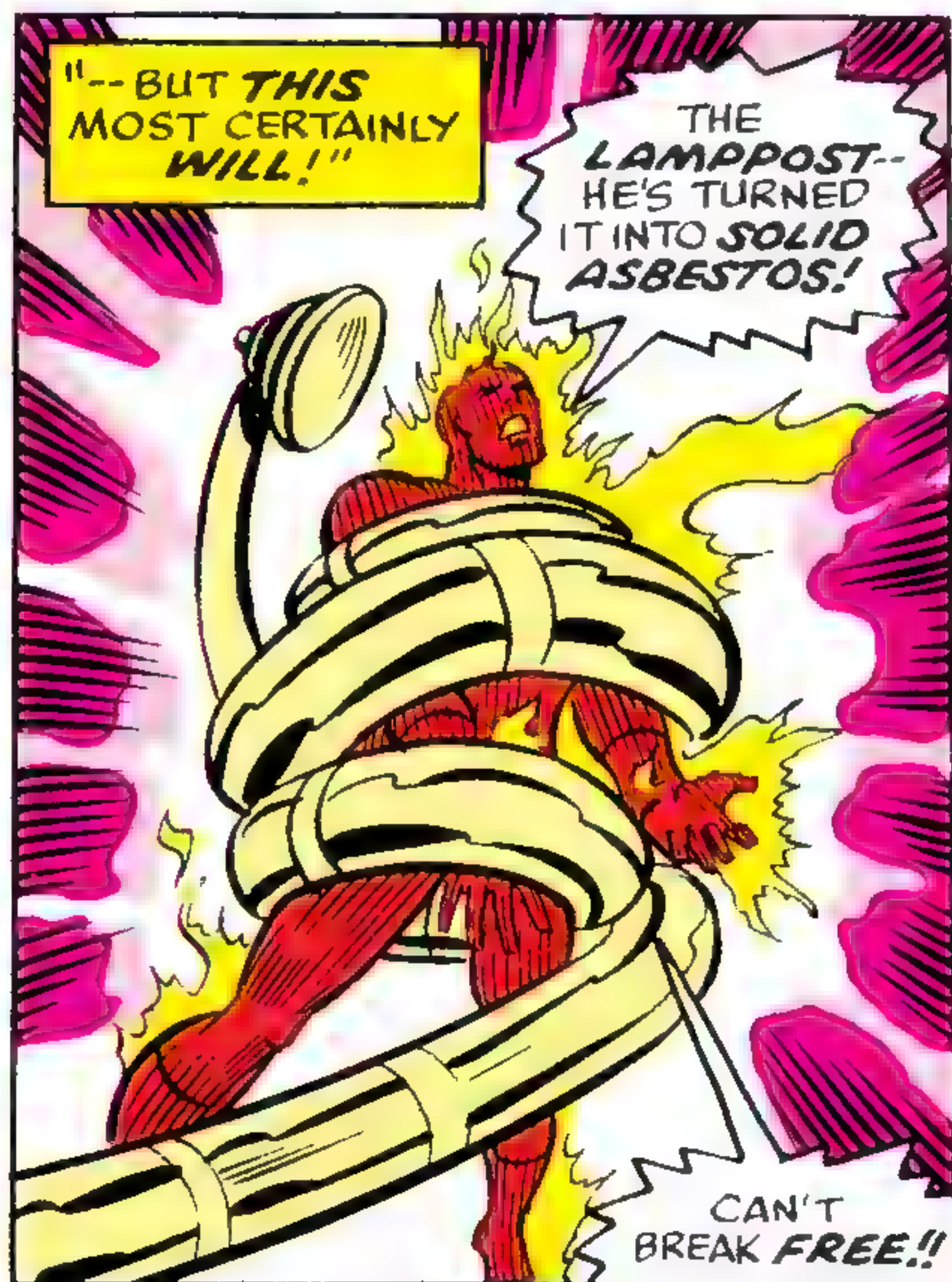
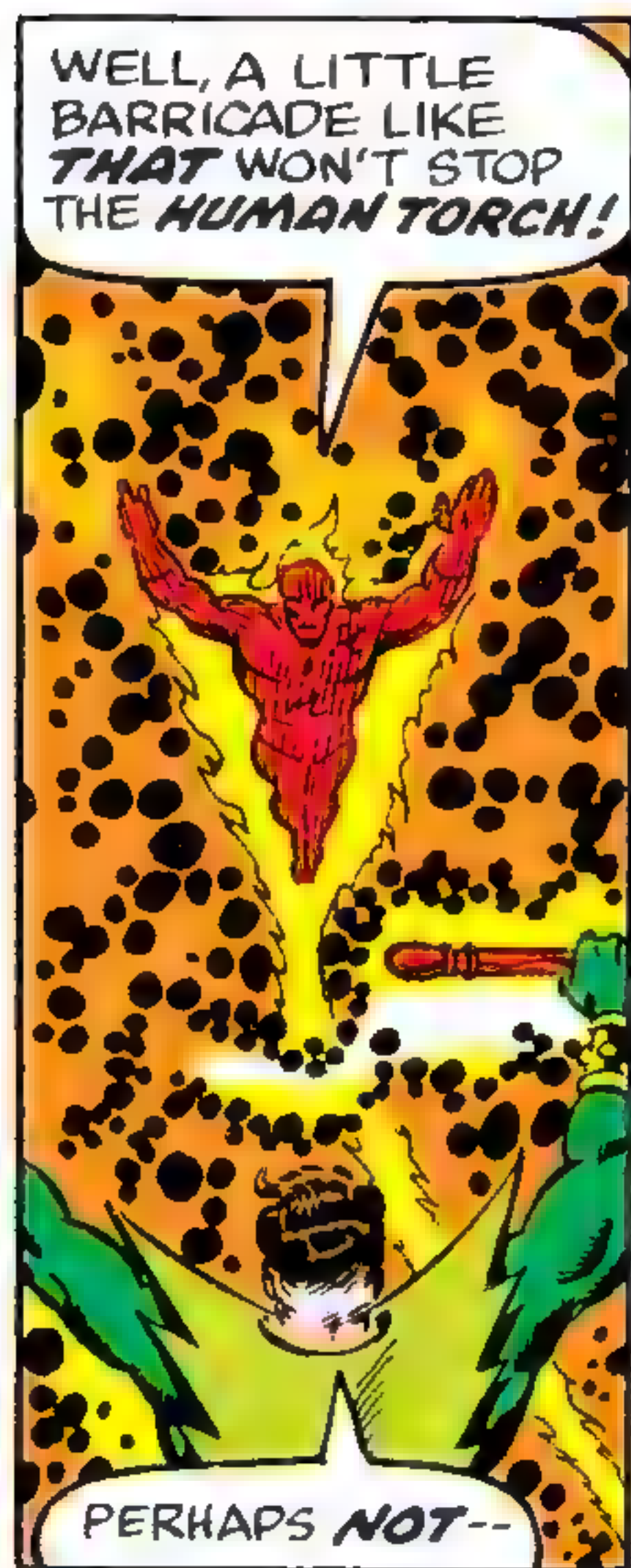
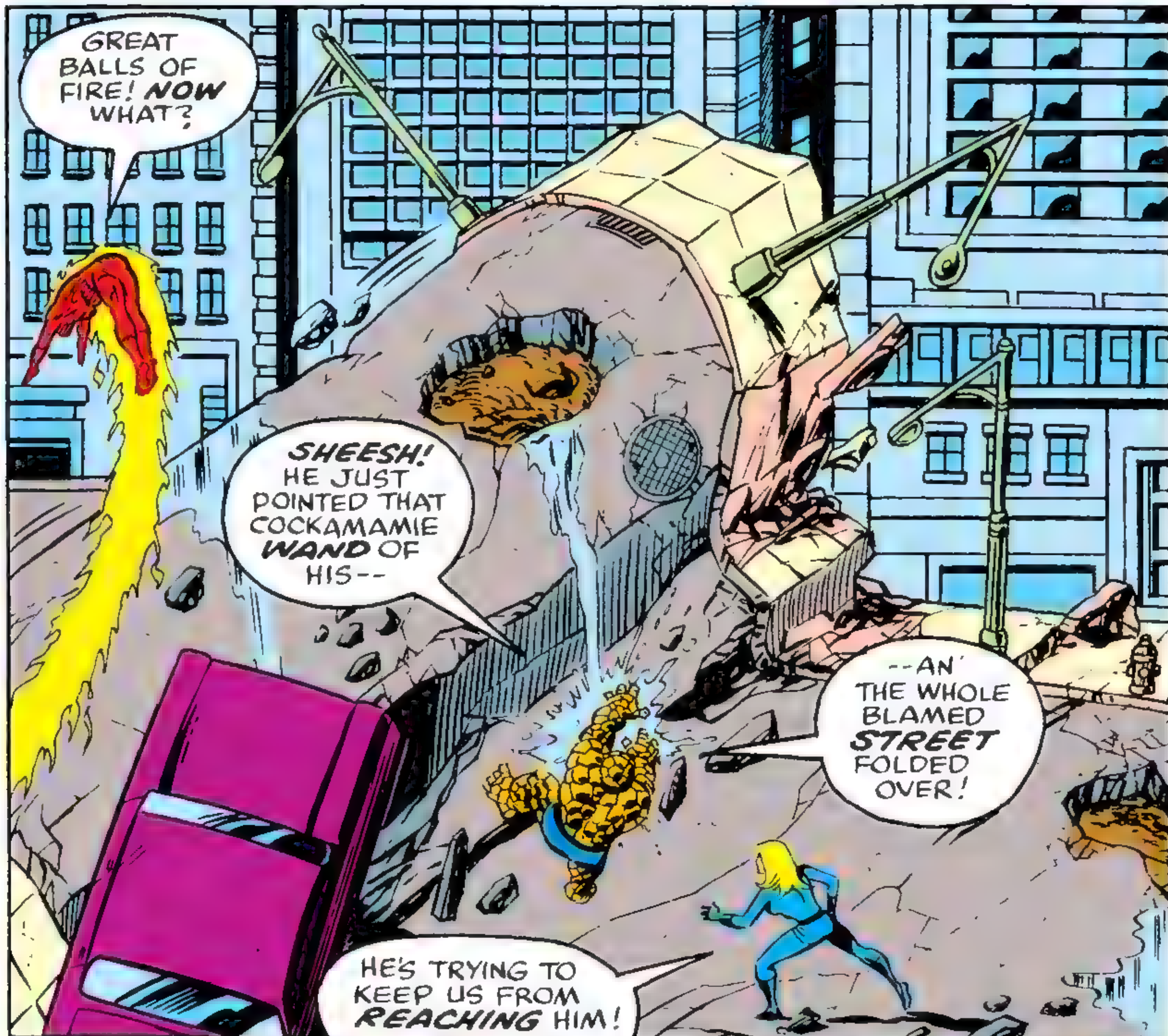
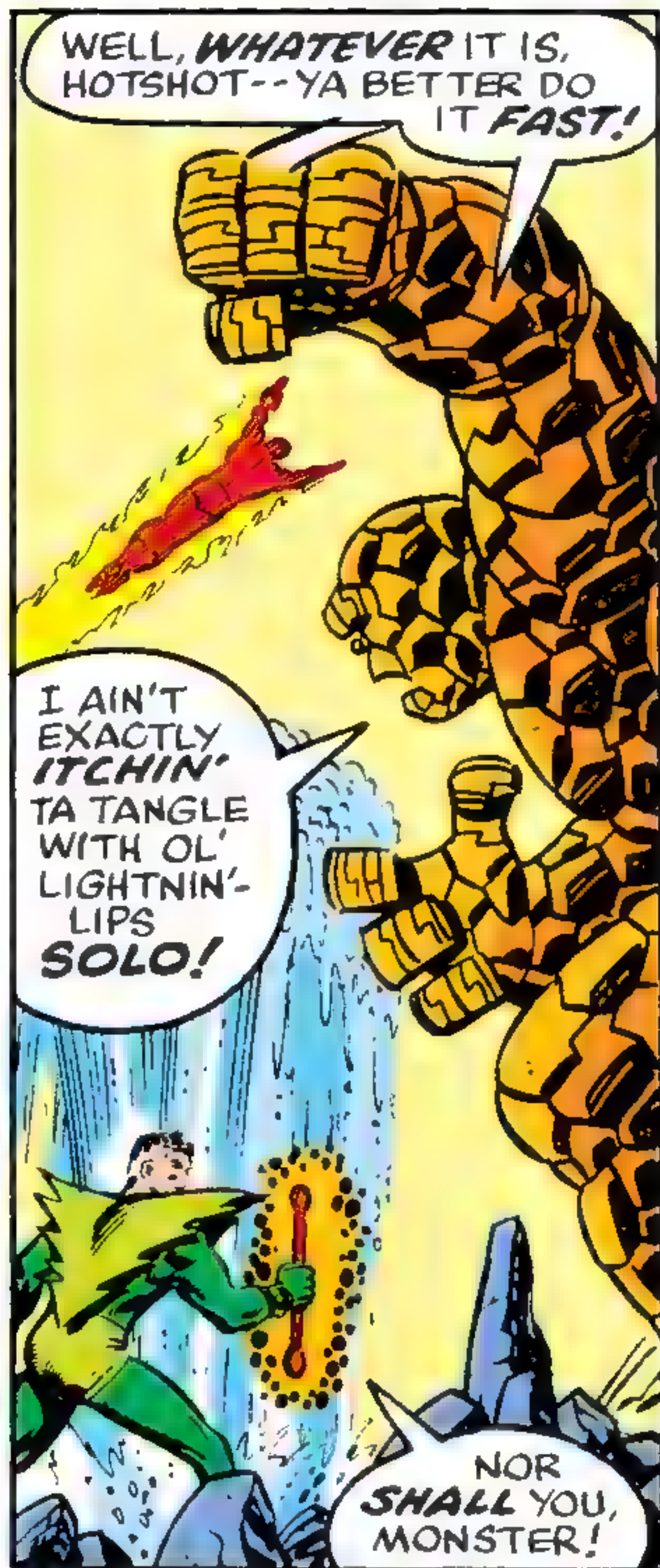
AND A CERTAIN GRIM-EYED **ALIEN** WATCHES IN SILENCE, AS THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN SUDDENLY **TRANSFORMS** HIMSELF INTO A **GREEN-AND-PURPLE DIRIGIBLE**, AND FLOATS OFF INTO THE **AFTERNOON SKY...**

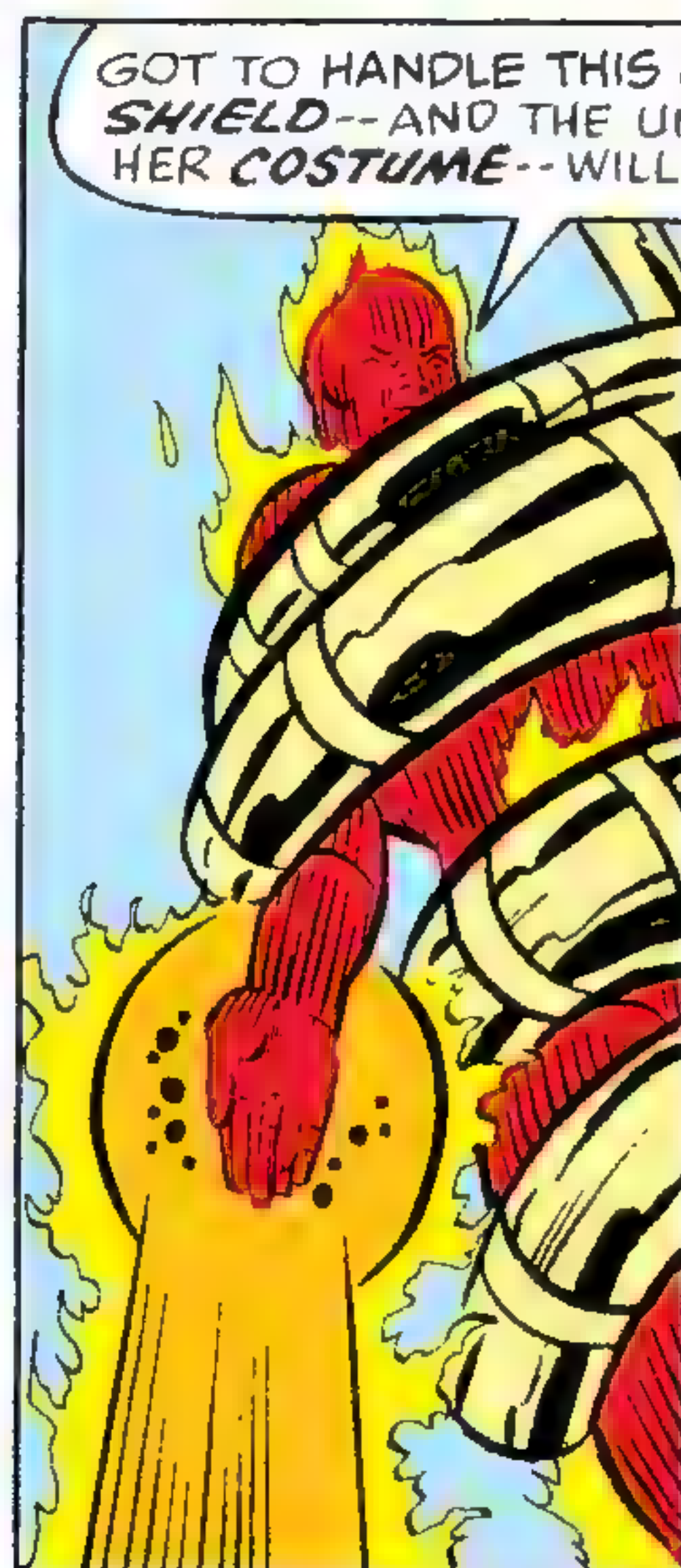
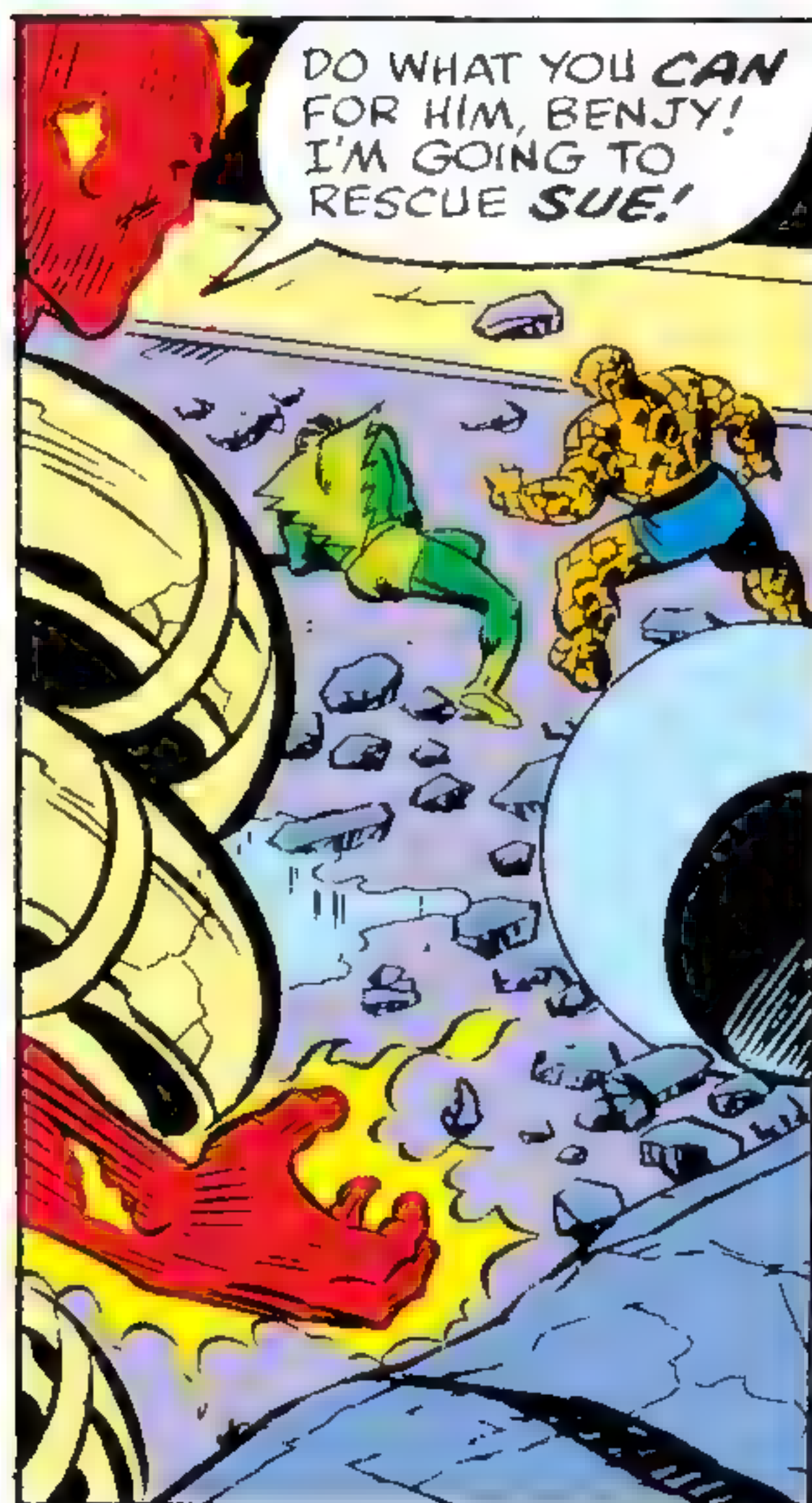
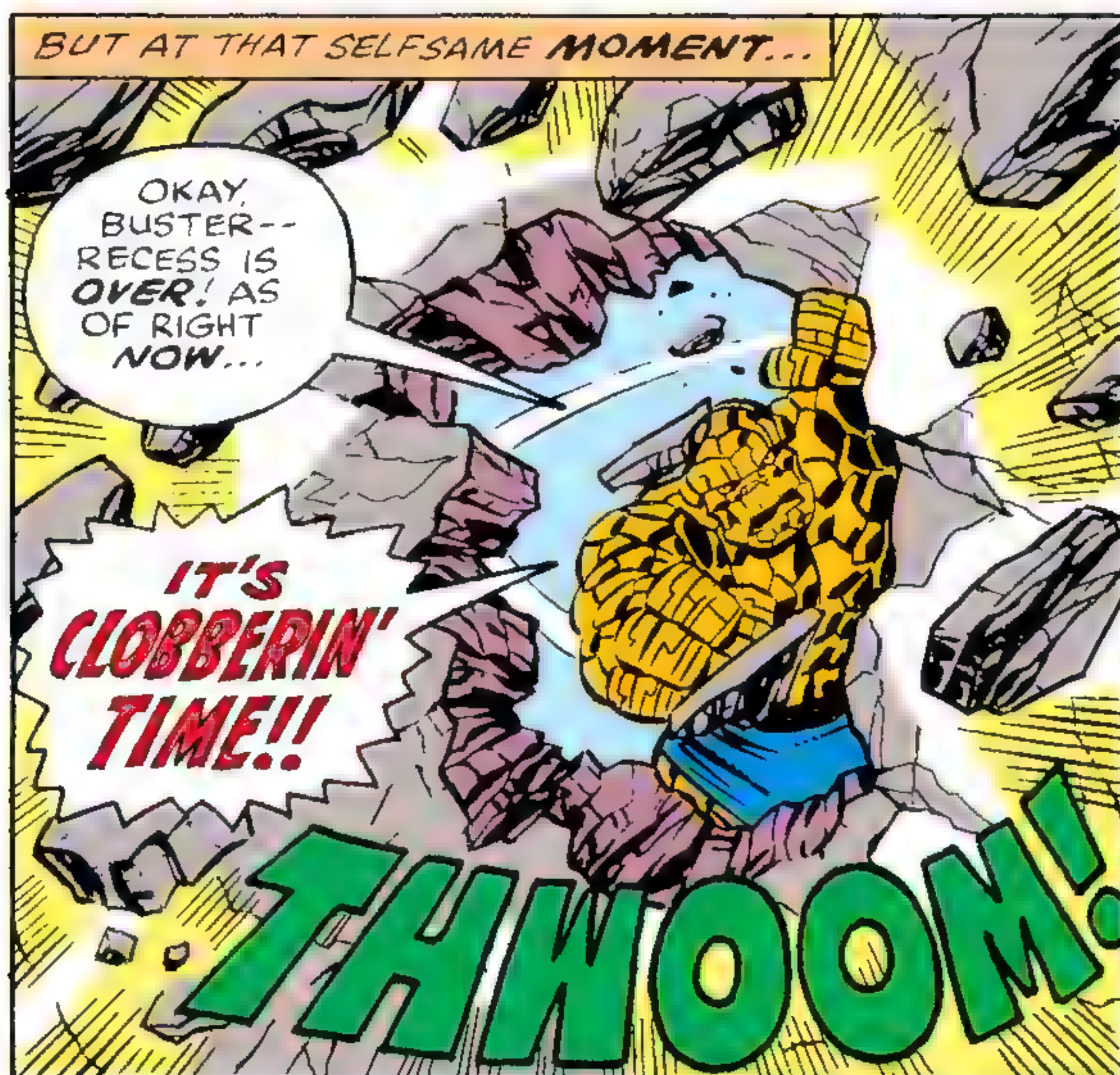
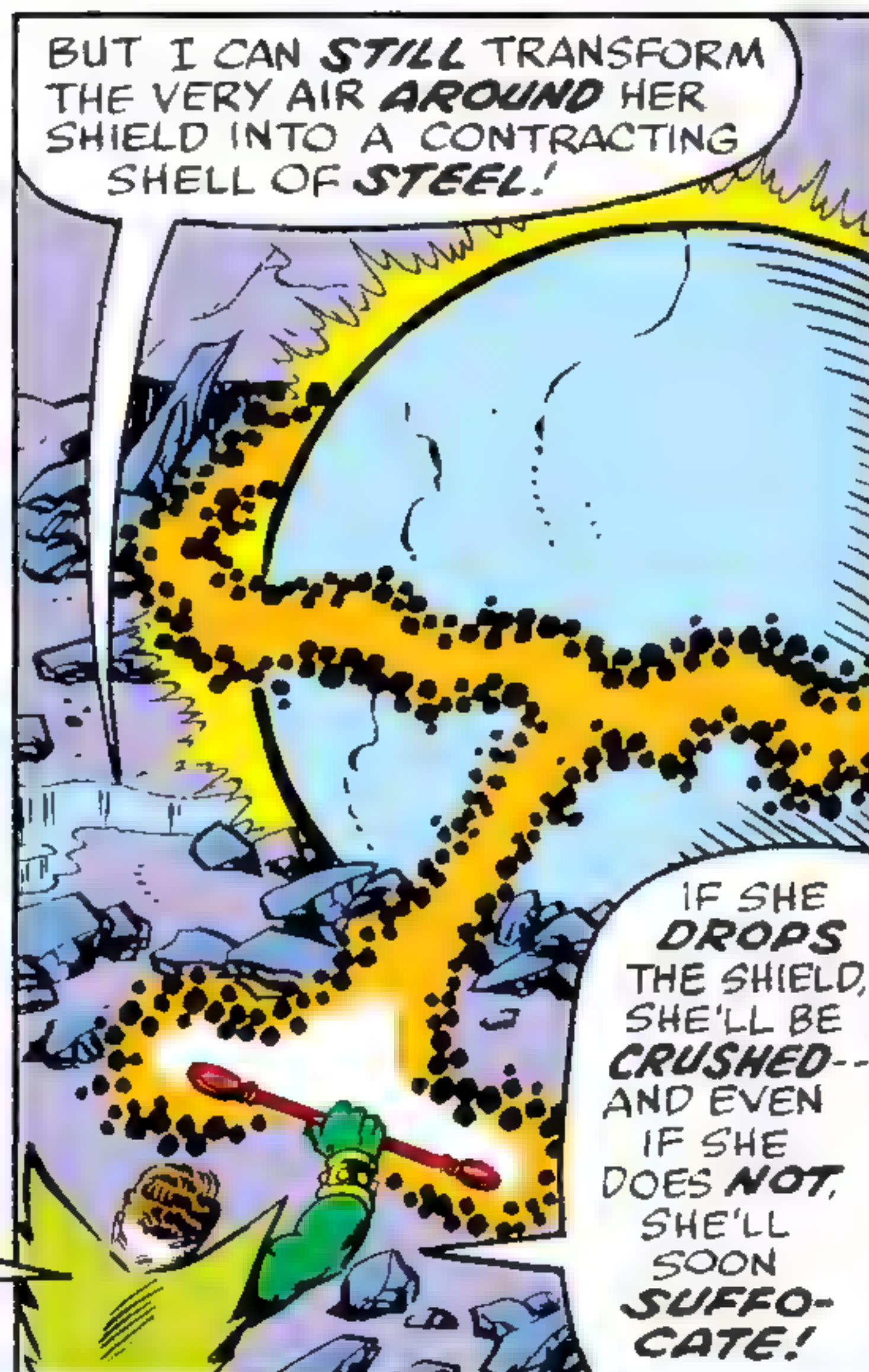


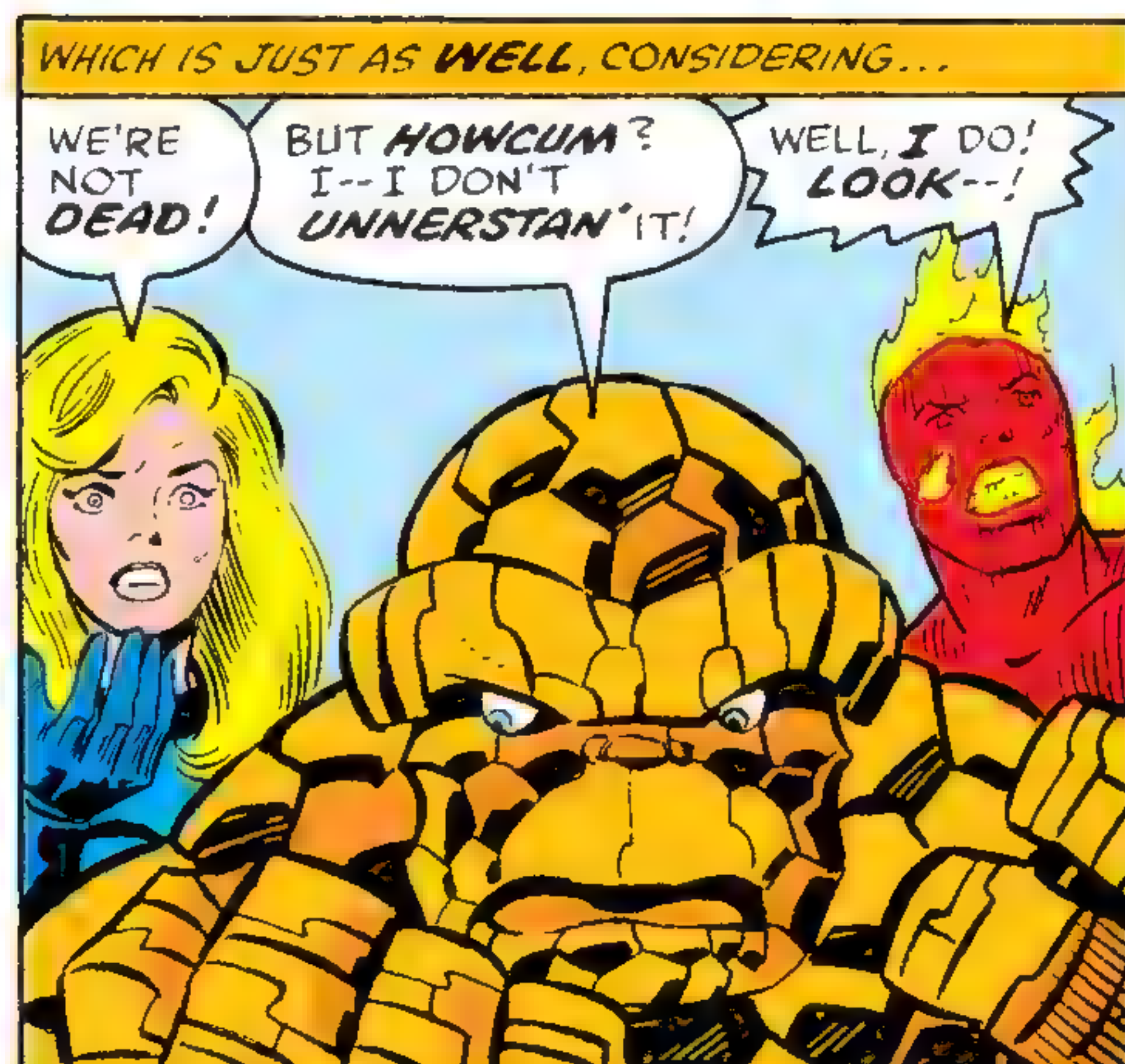
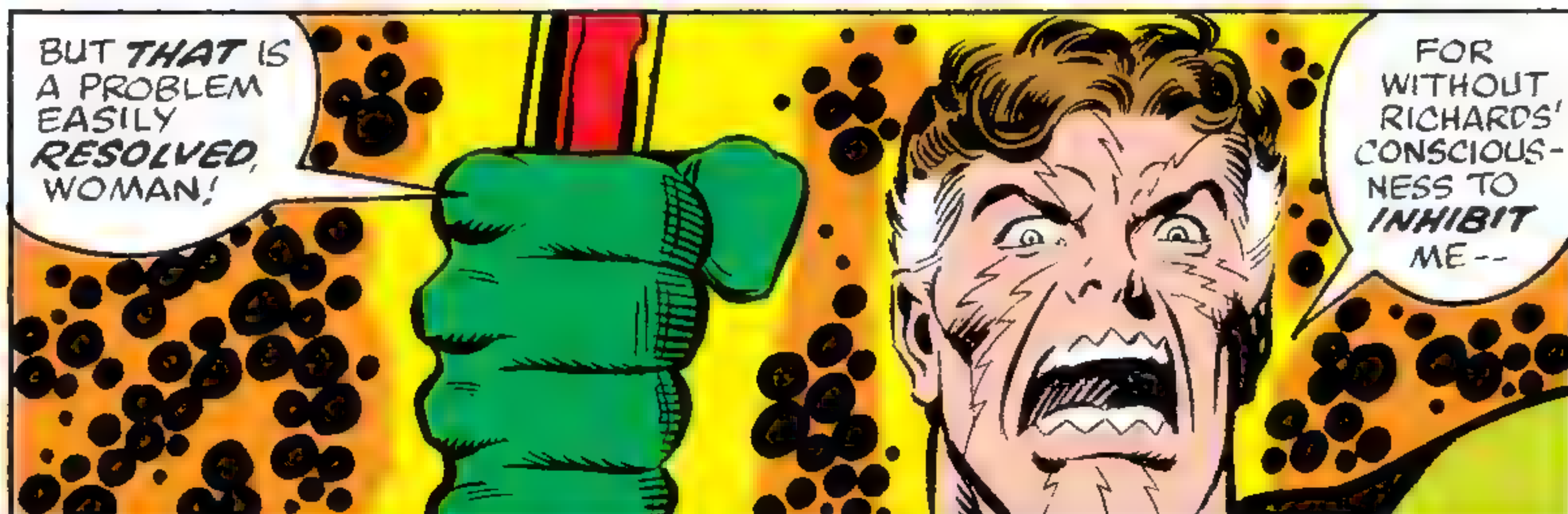
EH? THE FLAMING ONE IS BACK!

SURE--I GOT PAST THE **WATER BARRICADE** WHILE YOU WERE **DISTRACTED!**

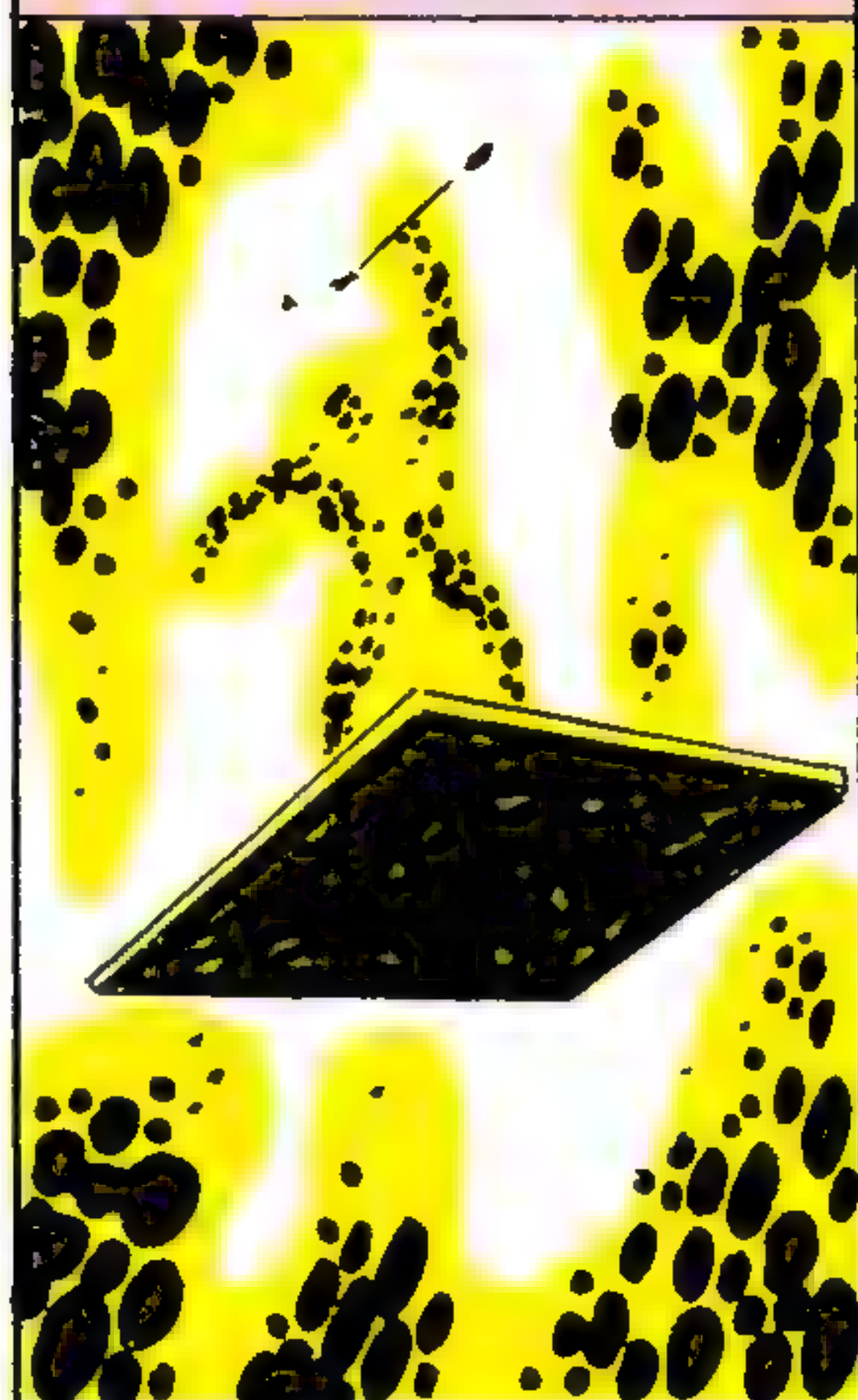
BUT **WHAT** AM I SUPPOSED TO DO **NOW?**



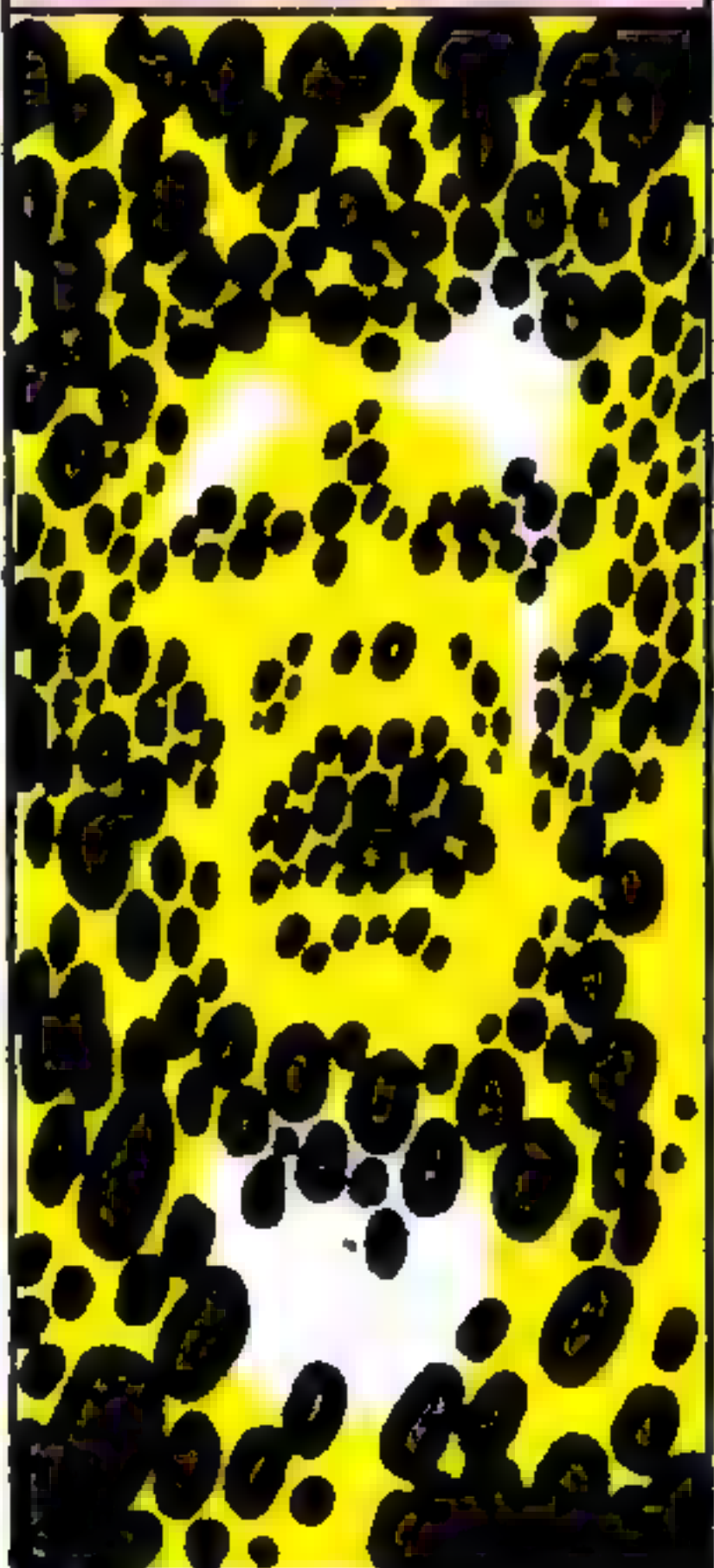




FOR AN INSTANT, THE TRANSFORMED FIGURE OF REED RICHARDS IS ALMOST LOST WITHIN A NIMBUS OF FURIOUS MOLECULAR ENERGY--



--WHILE THE MOLECULE MAN STRUGGLES DESPERATELY TO RETAIN CONTROL OF HIS PAIN-WRACKED HOST BODY...

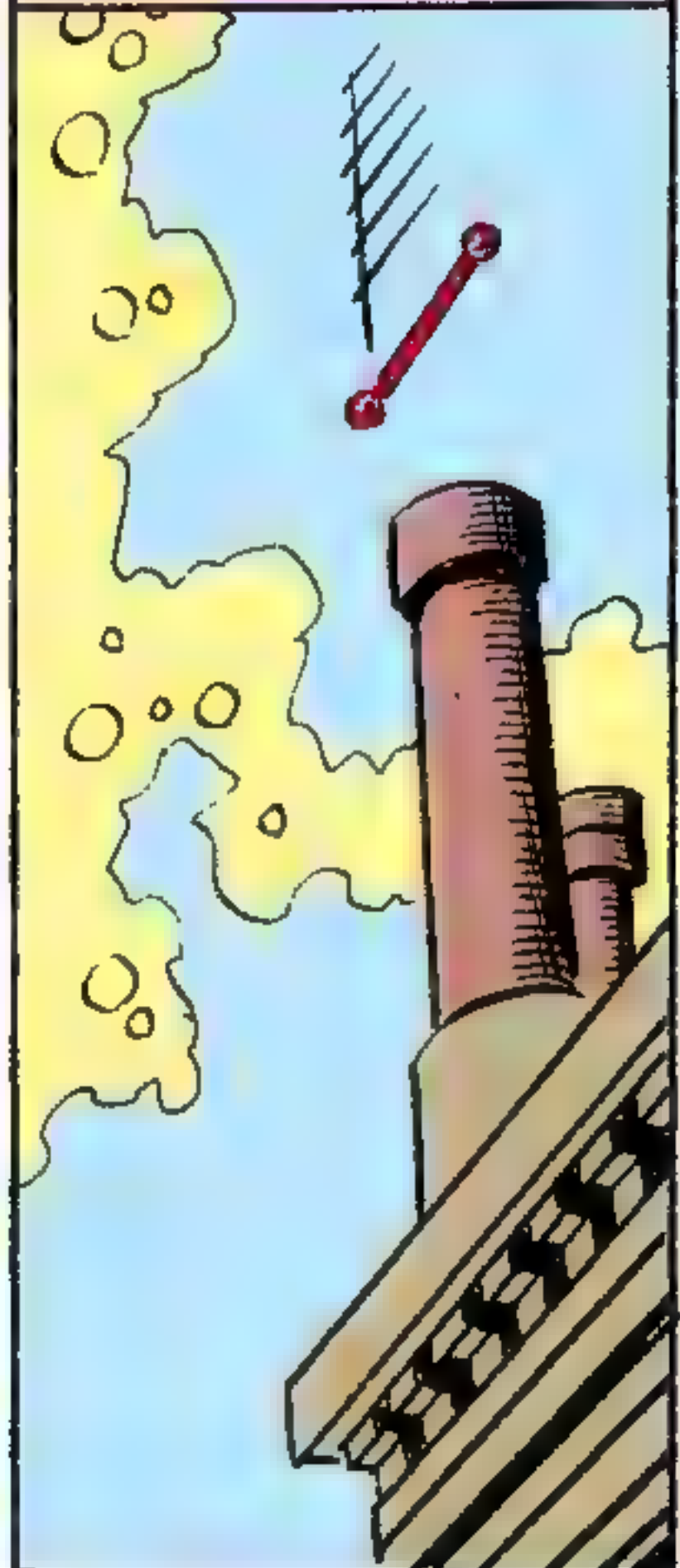


...BUT IT IS A STRUGGLE HE ULTIMATELY LOSES!

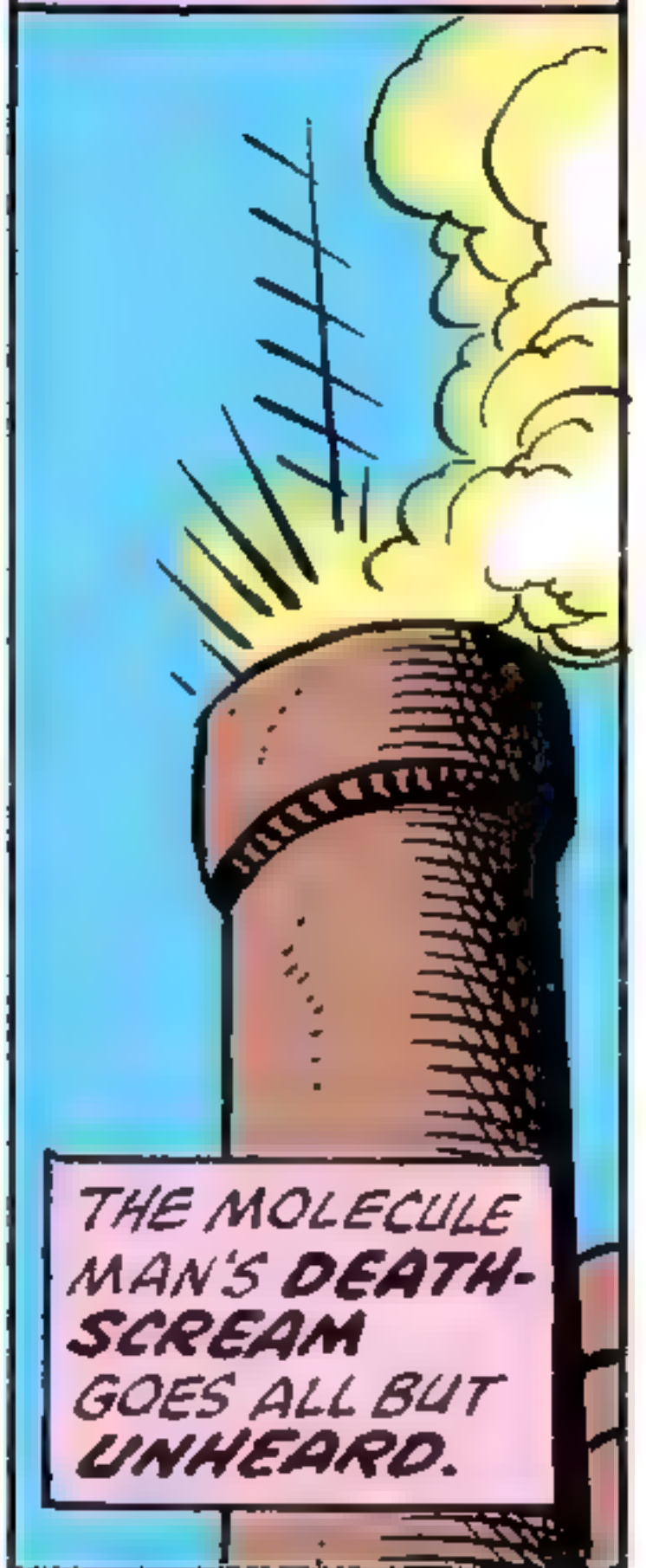


AN AGONY-INDUCED INVOLUNTARY REFLEX SPLAYS REED RICHARDS' HAND WIDE OPEN...

...AND, UNNOTICED BY THOSE BELOW, AN ORNATE CRIMSON WAND GOES SPINNING WILDLY AWAY...



...TO PLUNGE AT LAST INTO THE WAITING SMOKE-STACK OF A NEARBY FACTORY FURNACE!



THE MOLECULE MAN'S DEATH-SCREAM GOES ALL BUT UNHEARD.

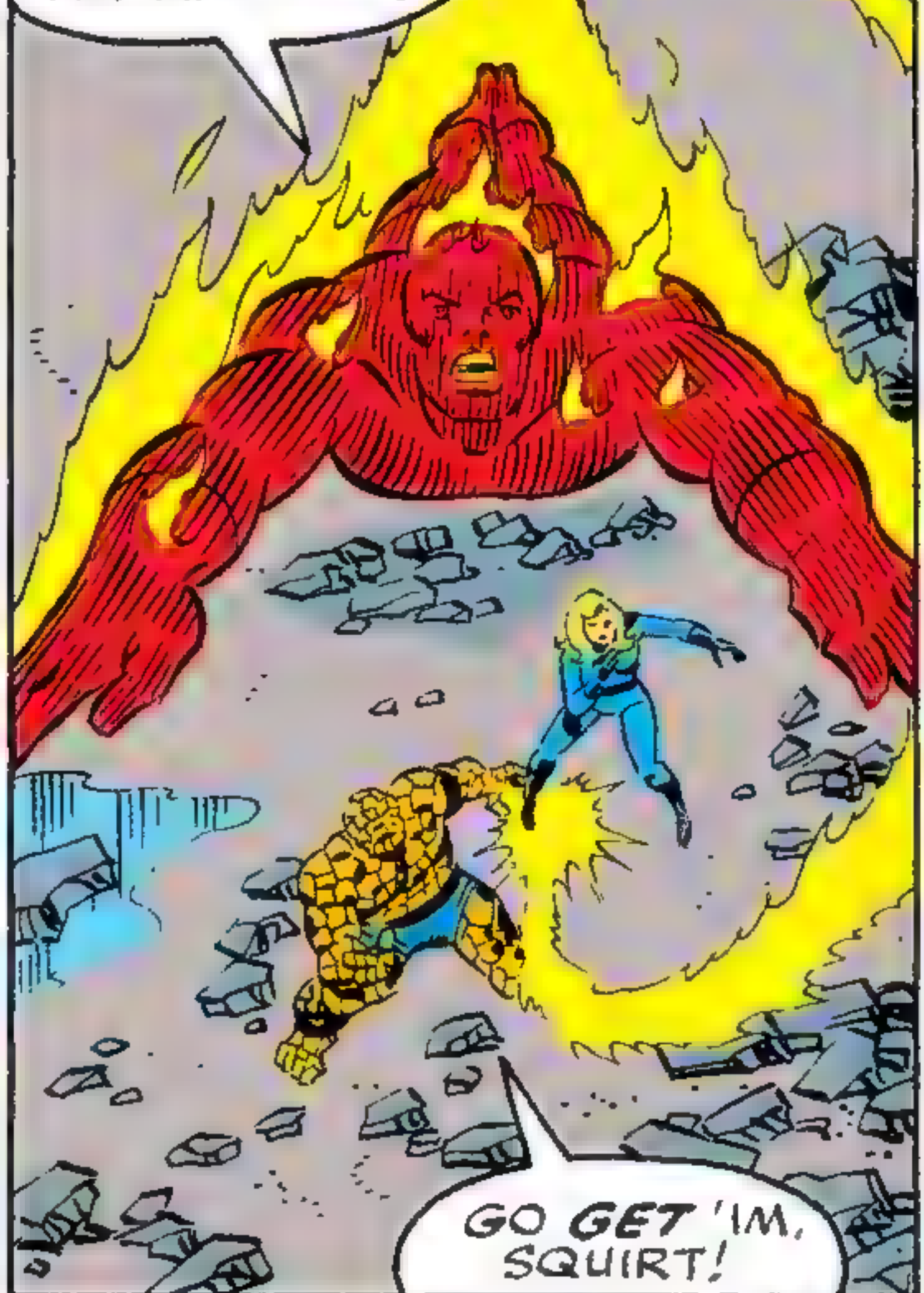
WHILE, WITHOUT THE MOLECULAR WAND TO SUSTAIN HIS LOFTY PERCH...



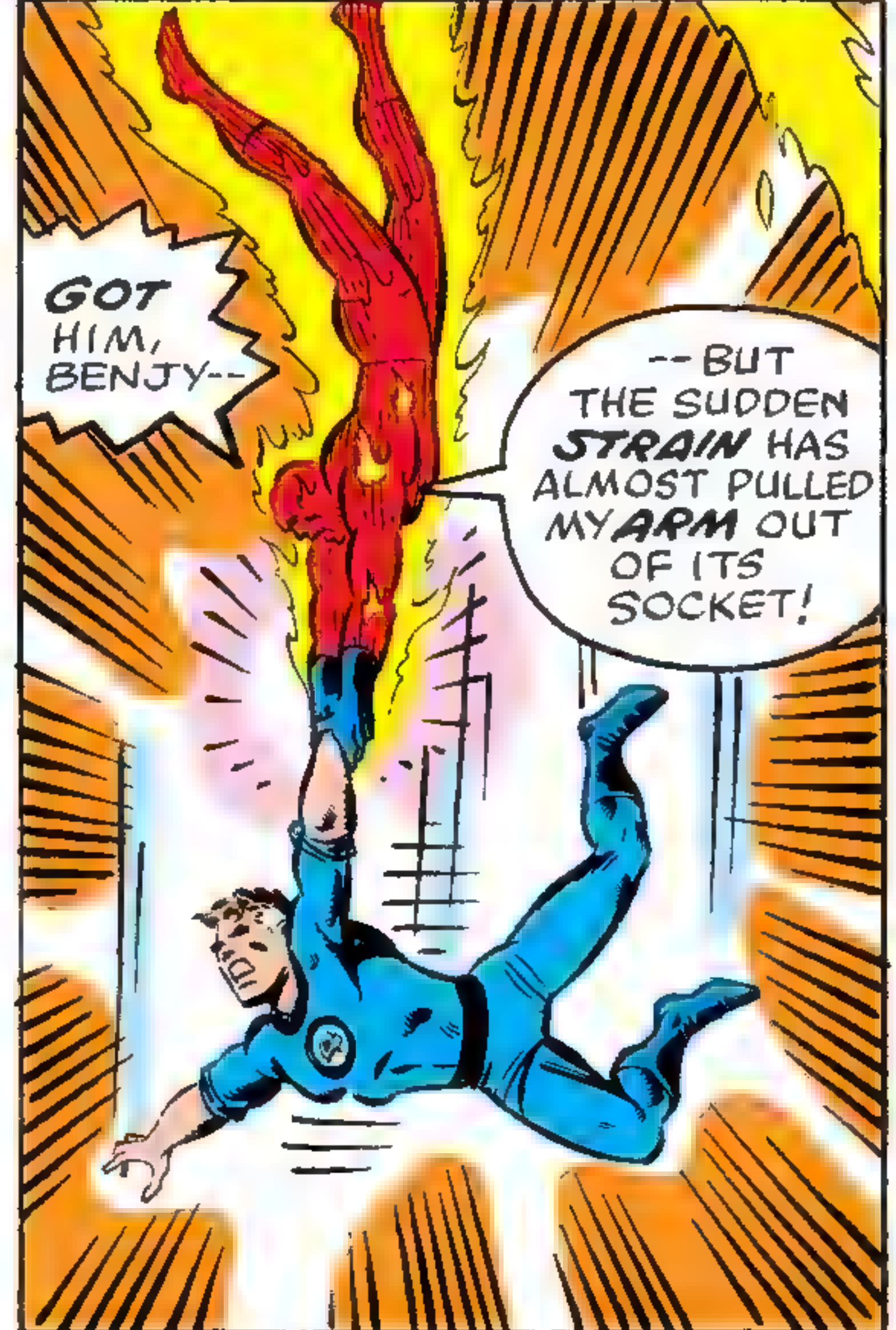
REED! HE'S HIMSELF AGAIN--!

AN' HE'S FALLIN'--!!

NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!

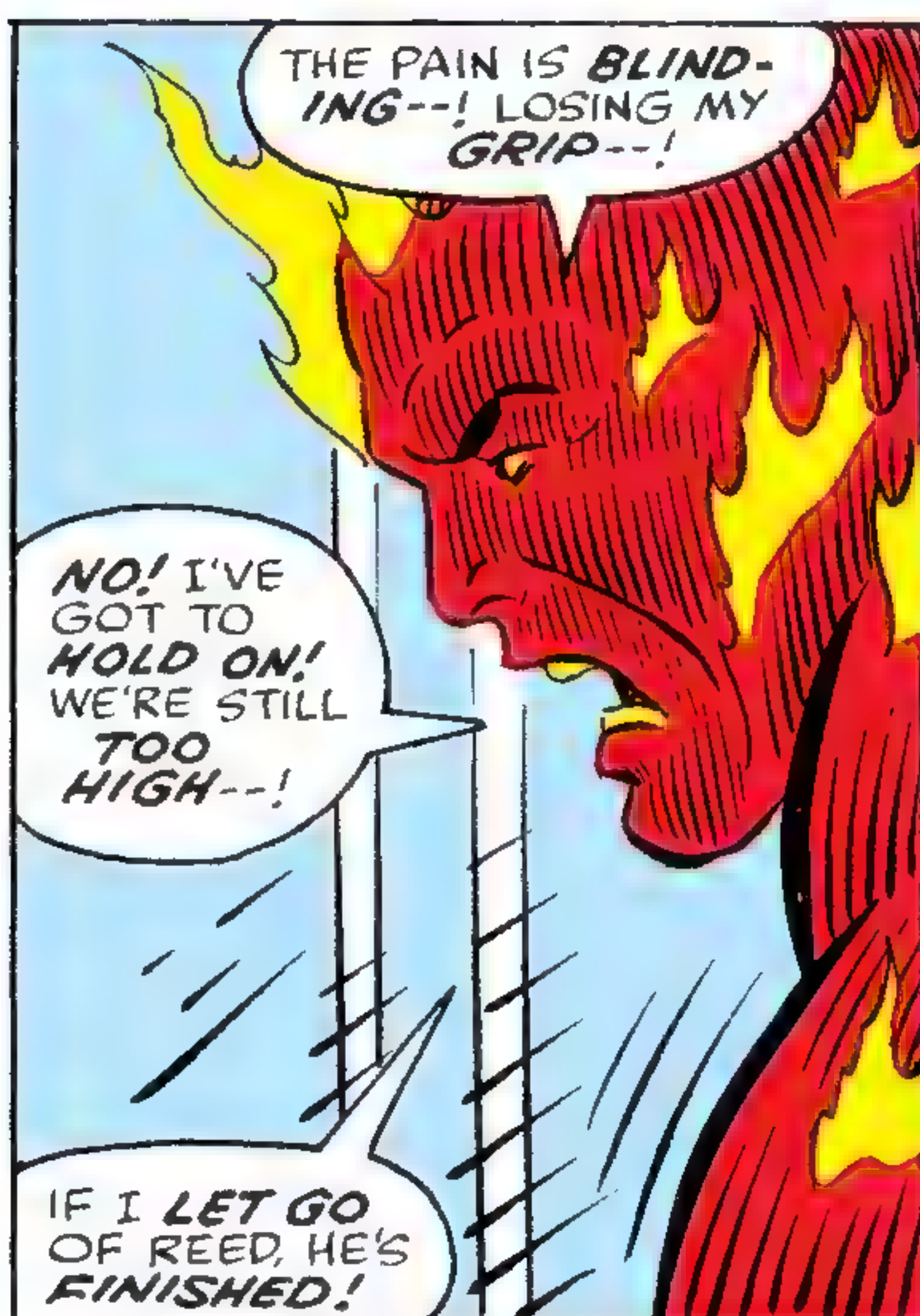


GO GET 'IM, SQUIRT!



GOT HIM, BENJY--

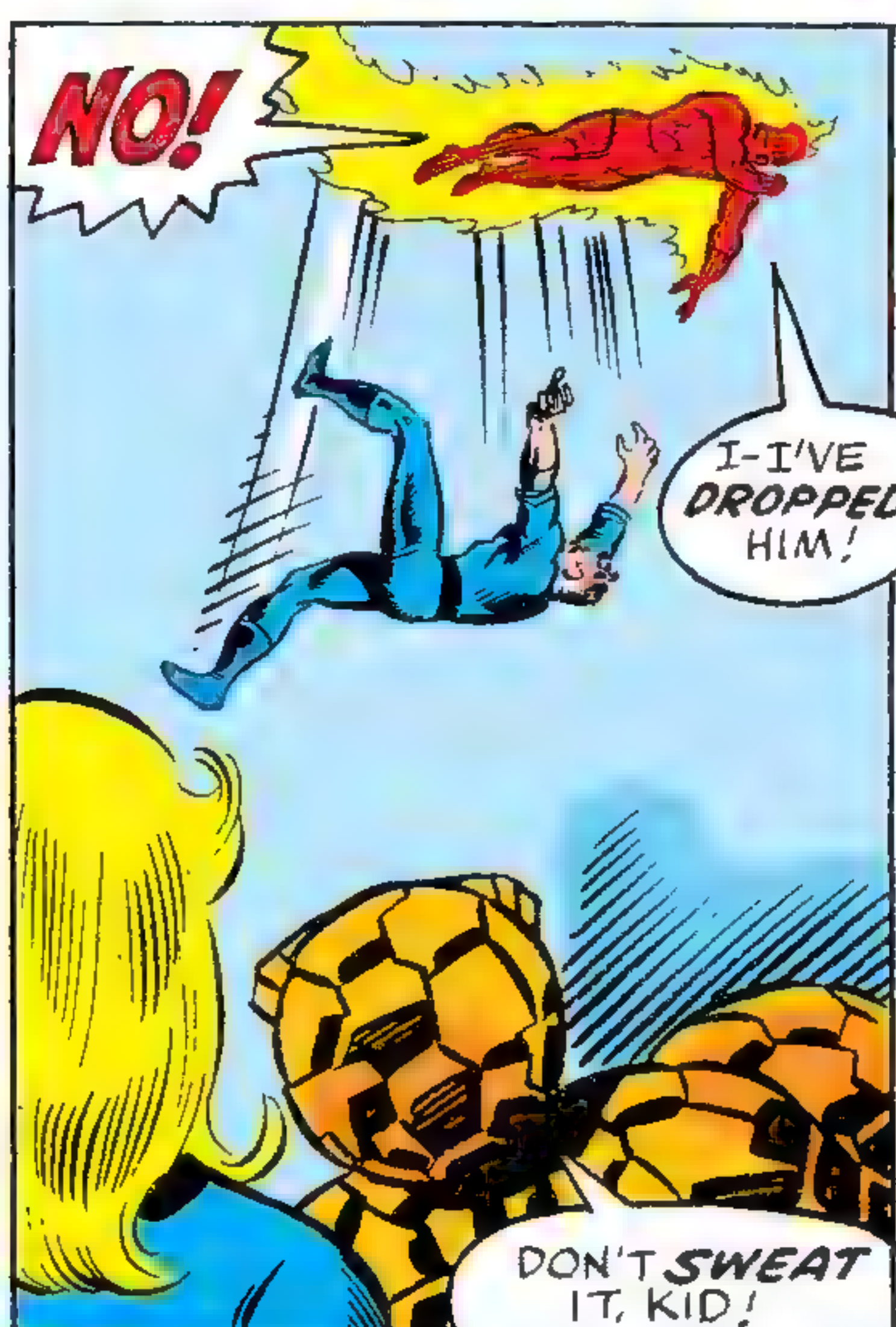
-- BUT THE SUDDEN STRAIN HAS ALMOST PULLED MY ARM OUT OF ITS SOCKET!



THE PAIN IS BLINDING--! LOSING MY GRIP--!

NO! I'VE GOT TO HOLD ON! WE'RE STILL TOO HIGH--!

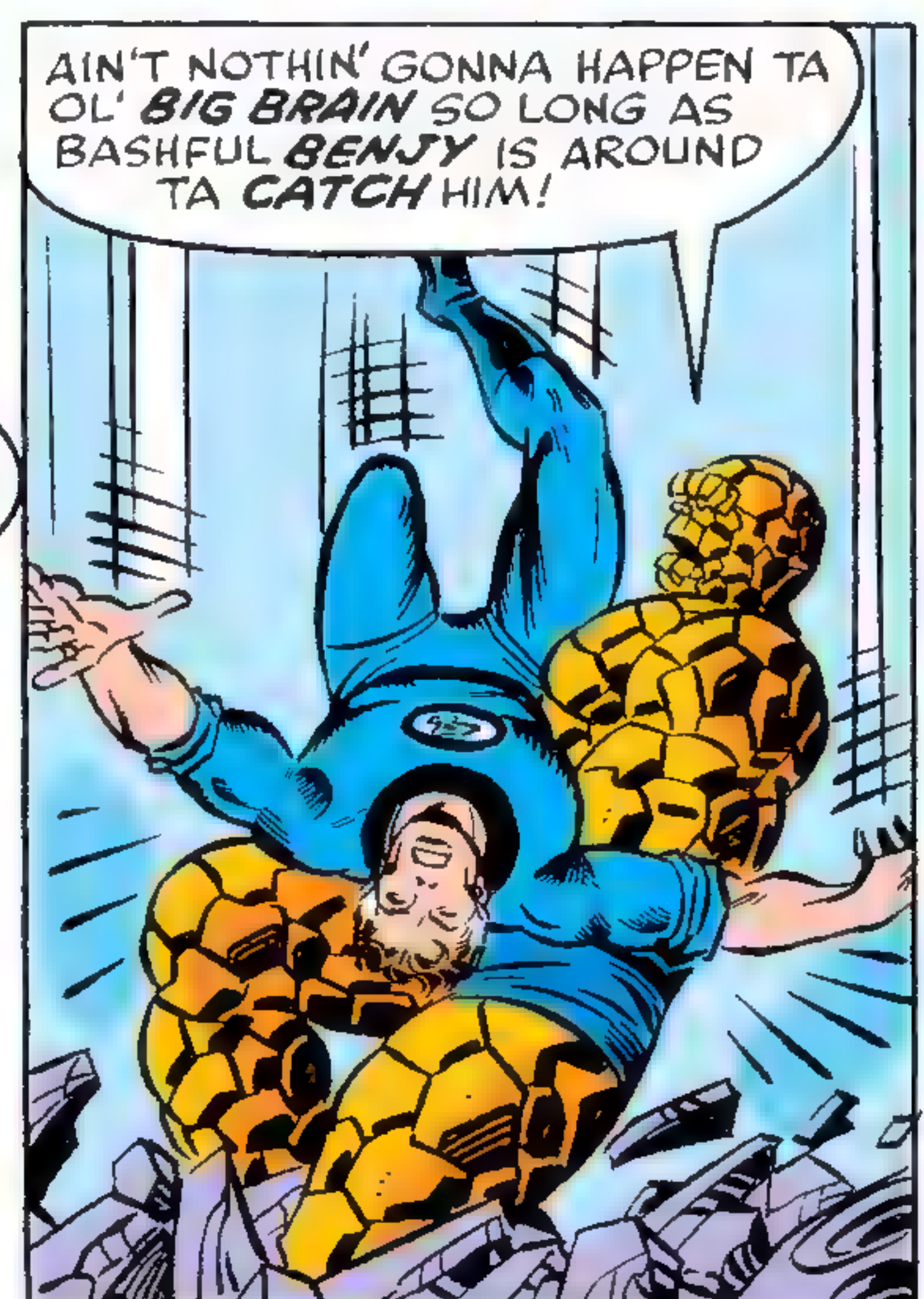
IF I LET GO OF REED, HE'S FINISHED!



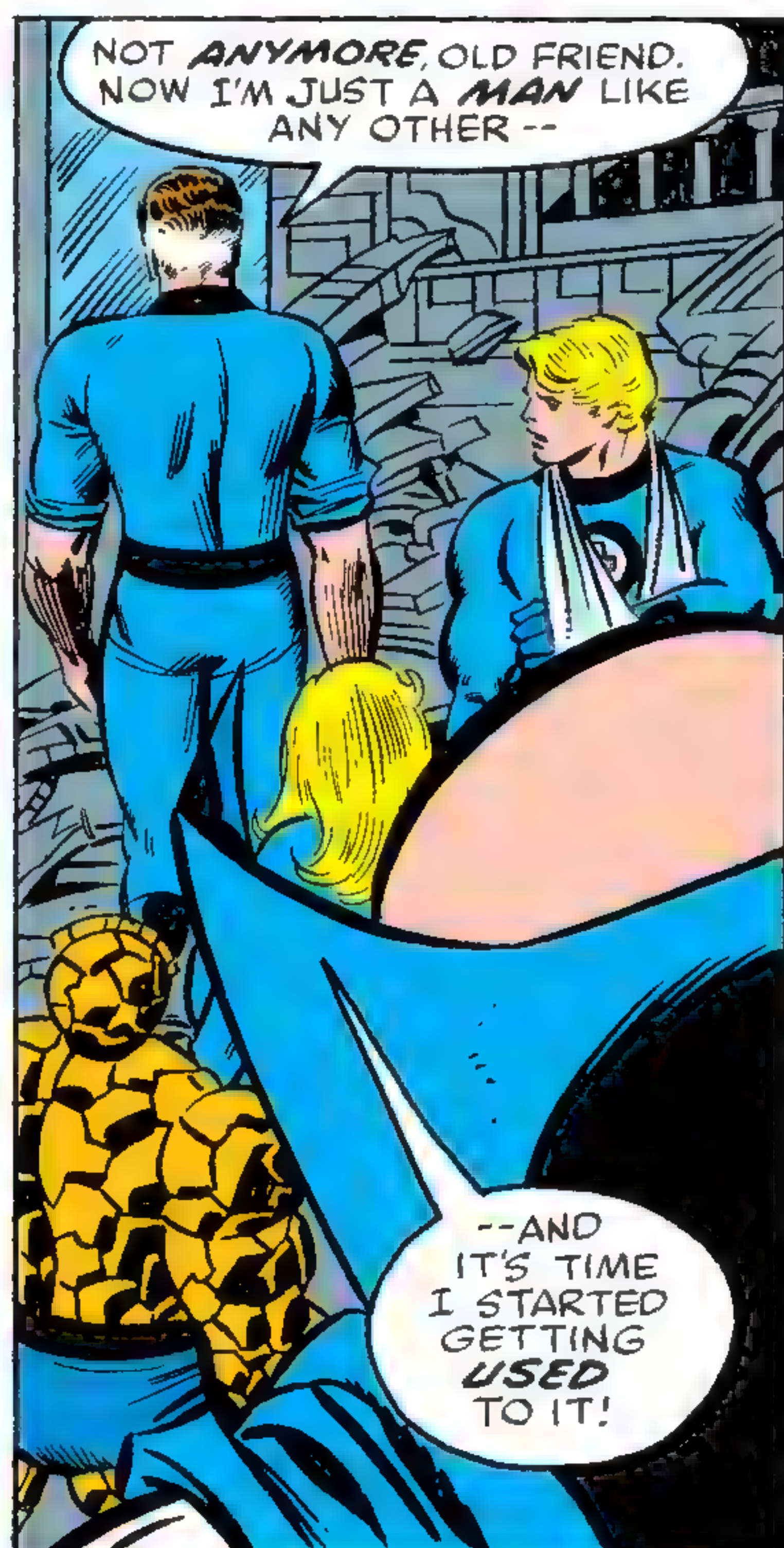
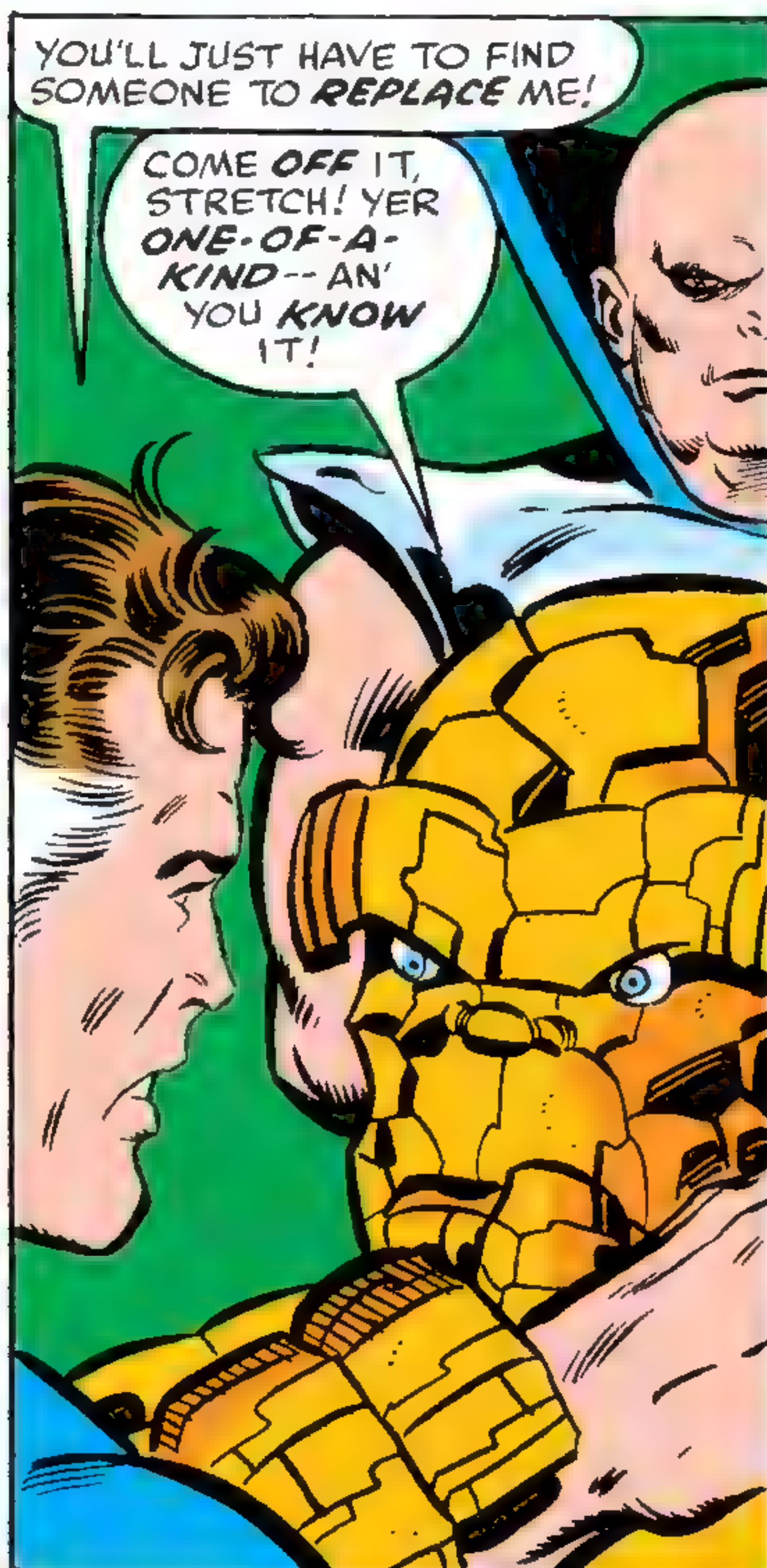
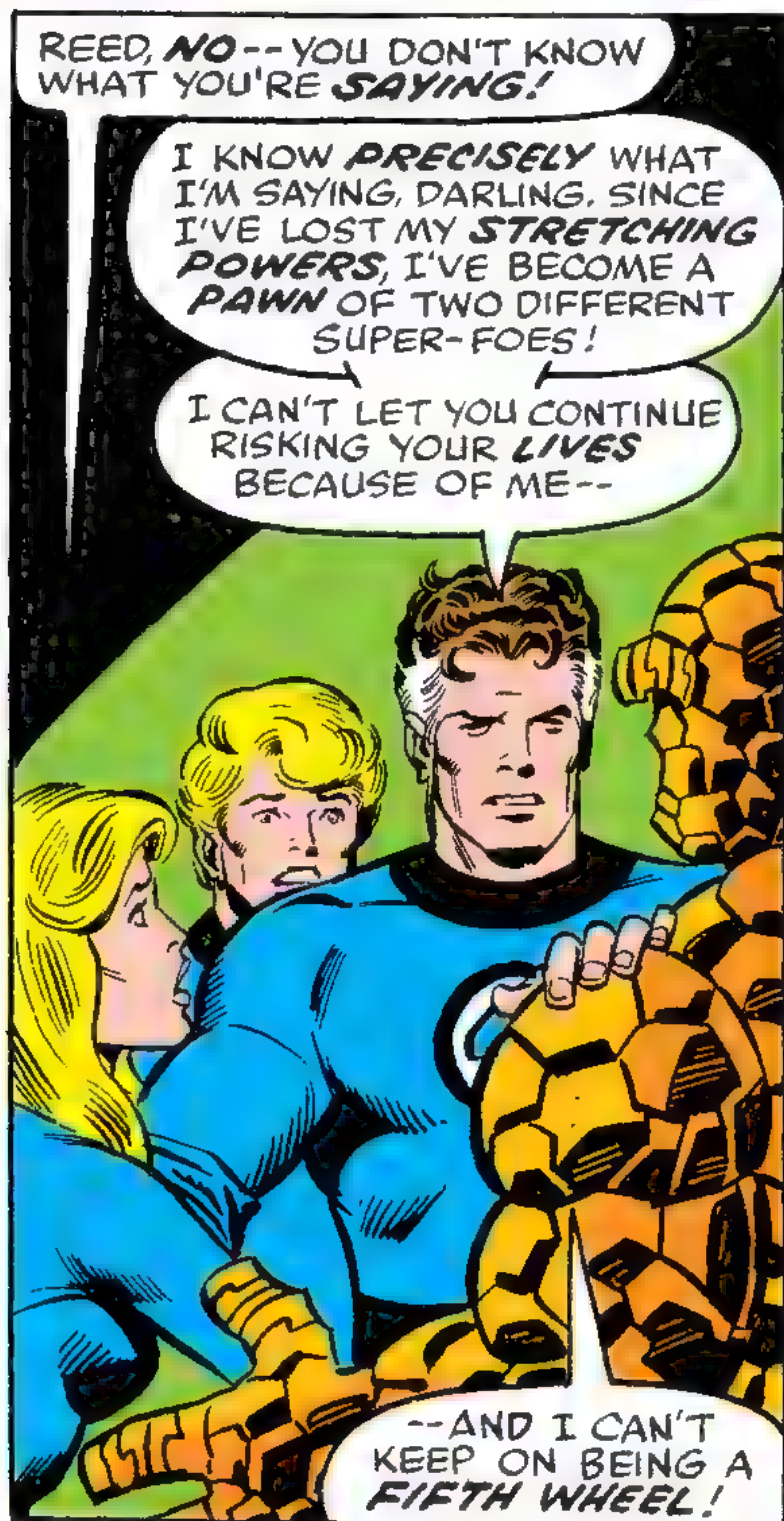
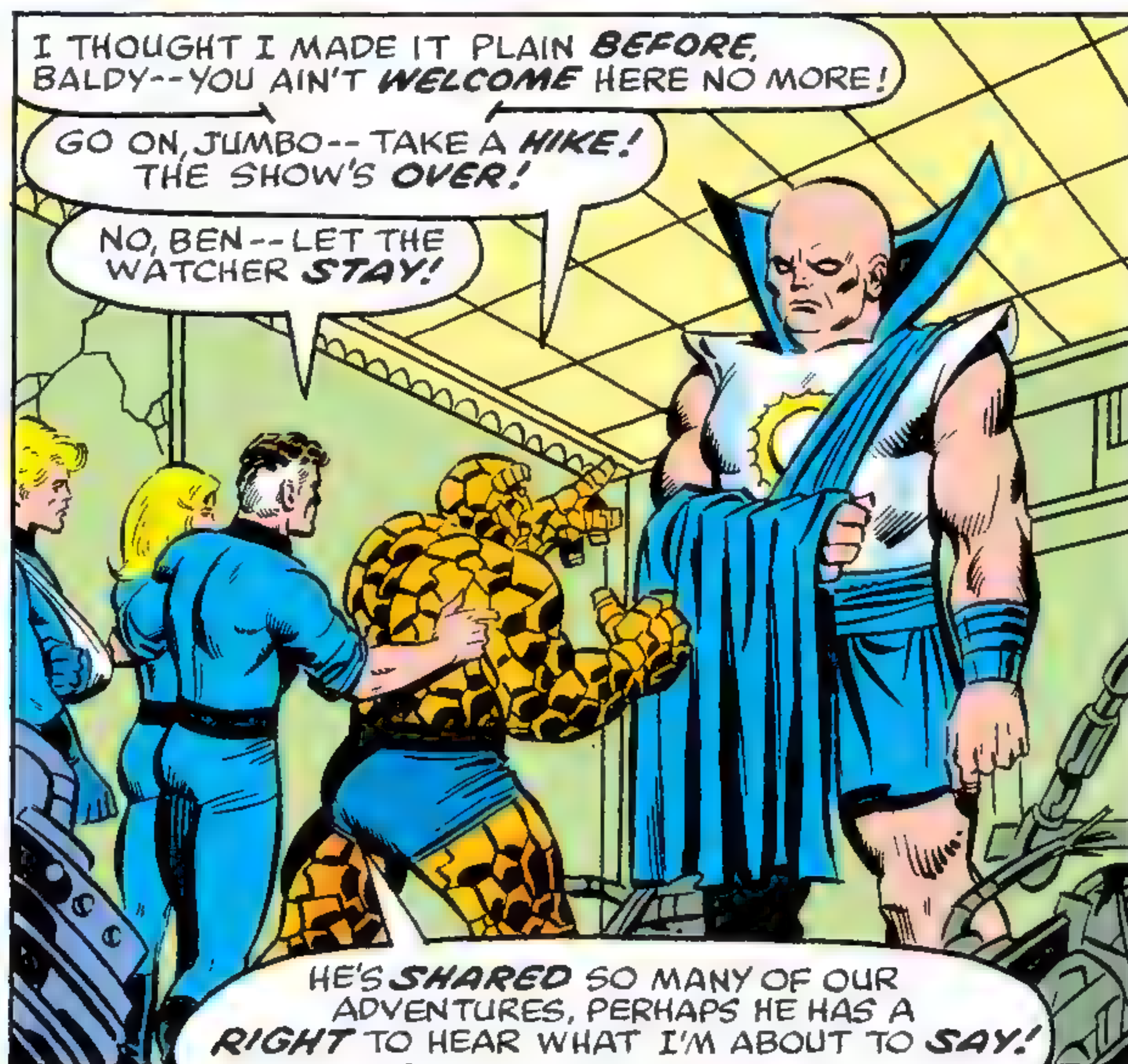
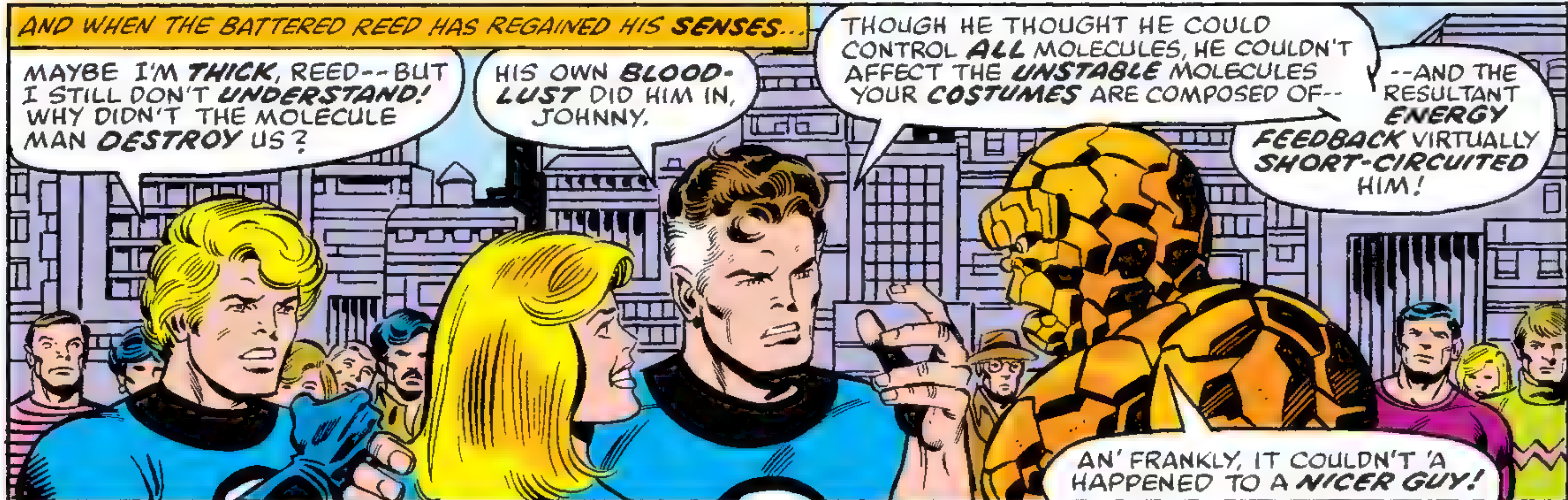
NO!

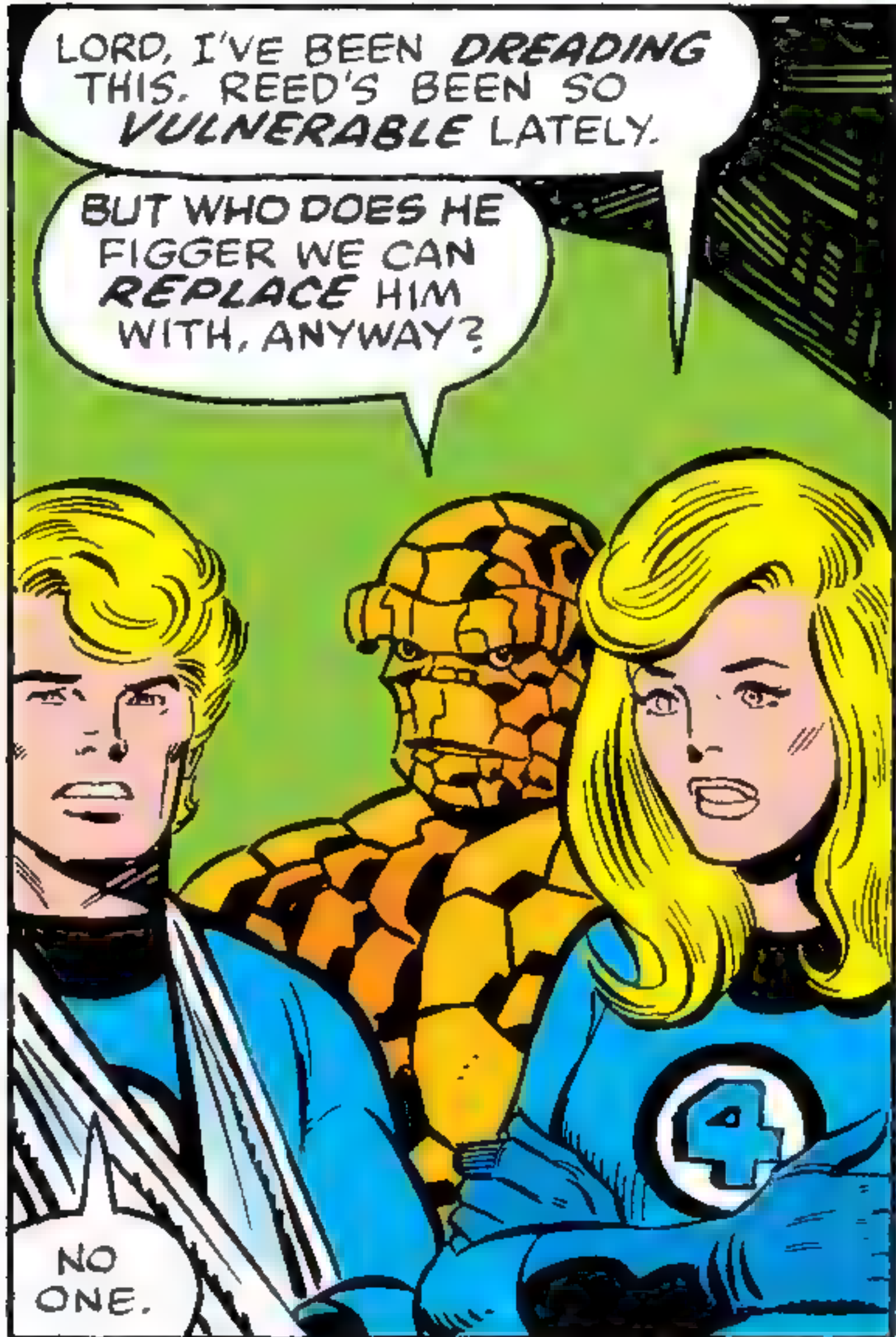
I-I'VE DROPPED HIM!

DON'T SWEAT IT, KID!



AIN'T NOTHIN' GONNA HAPPEN TA OL' BIG BRAIN SO LONG AS BASHFUL BENJY IS AROUND TA CATCH HIM!





LORD, I'VE BEEN **DREADING** THIS. REED'S BEEN SO **VULNERABLE** LATELY.

BUT WHO DOES HE FIGGER WE CAN **REPLACE** HIM WITH, ANYWAY?

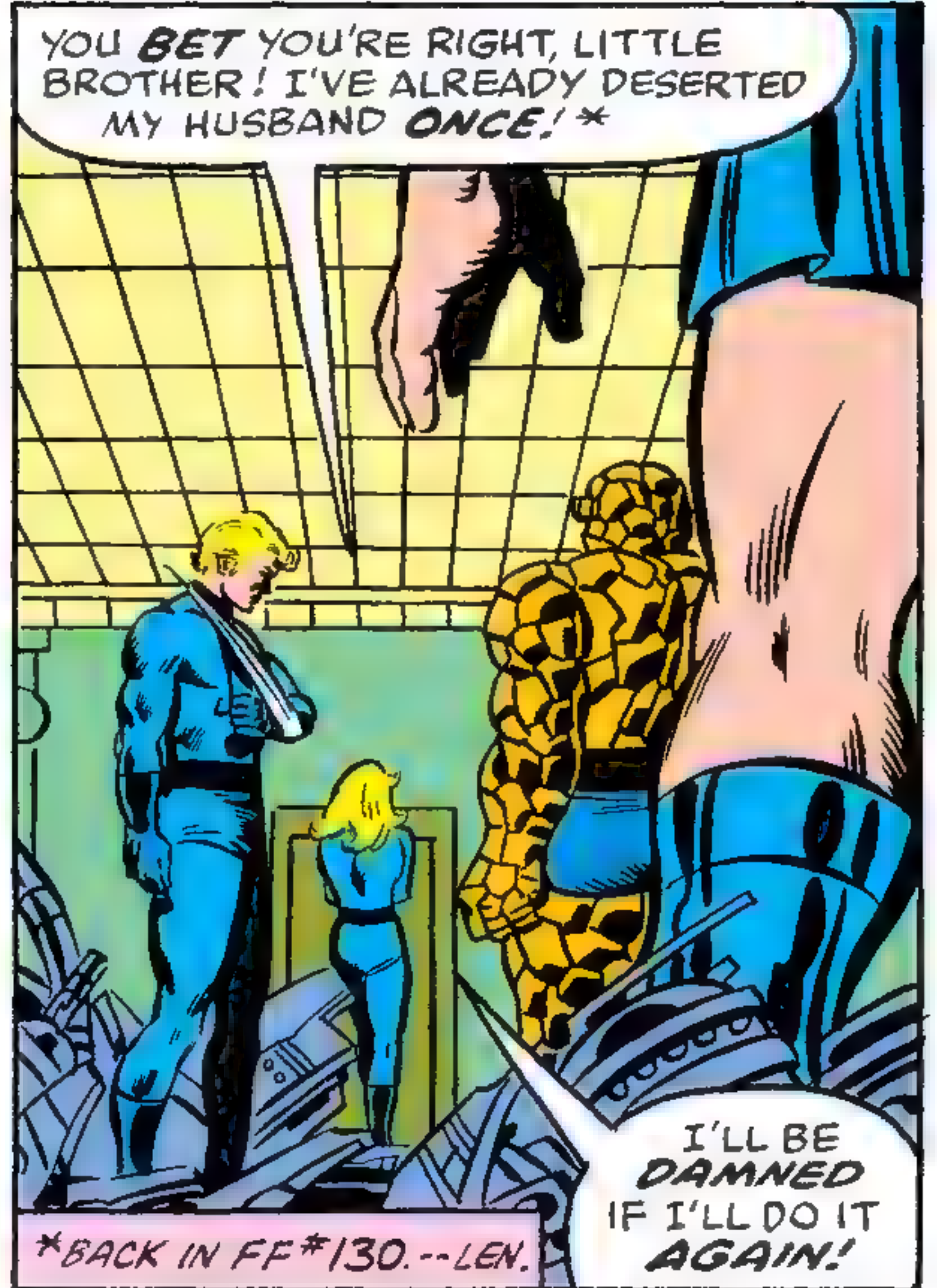
NO ONE.



THUNDRA... TIGRA... MEDUSA AND CRYSTAL... EVEN **POWER MAN**... THEY ALL HAVE THEIR **OWN** AFFAIRS TO CONCERN THEM NOW.

BESIDES, WE'RE GOING TO NEED **TWO** REPLACEMENTS...

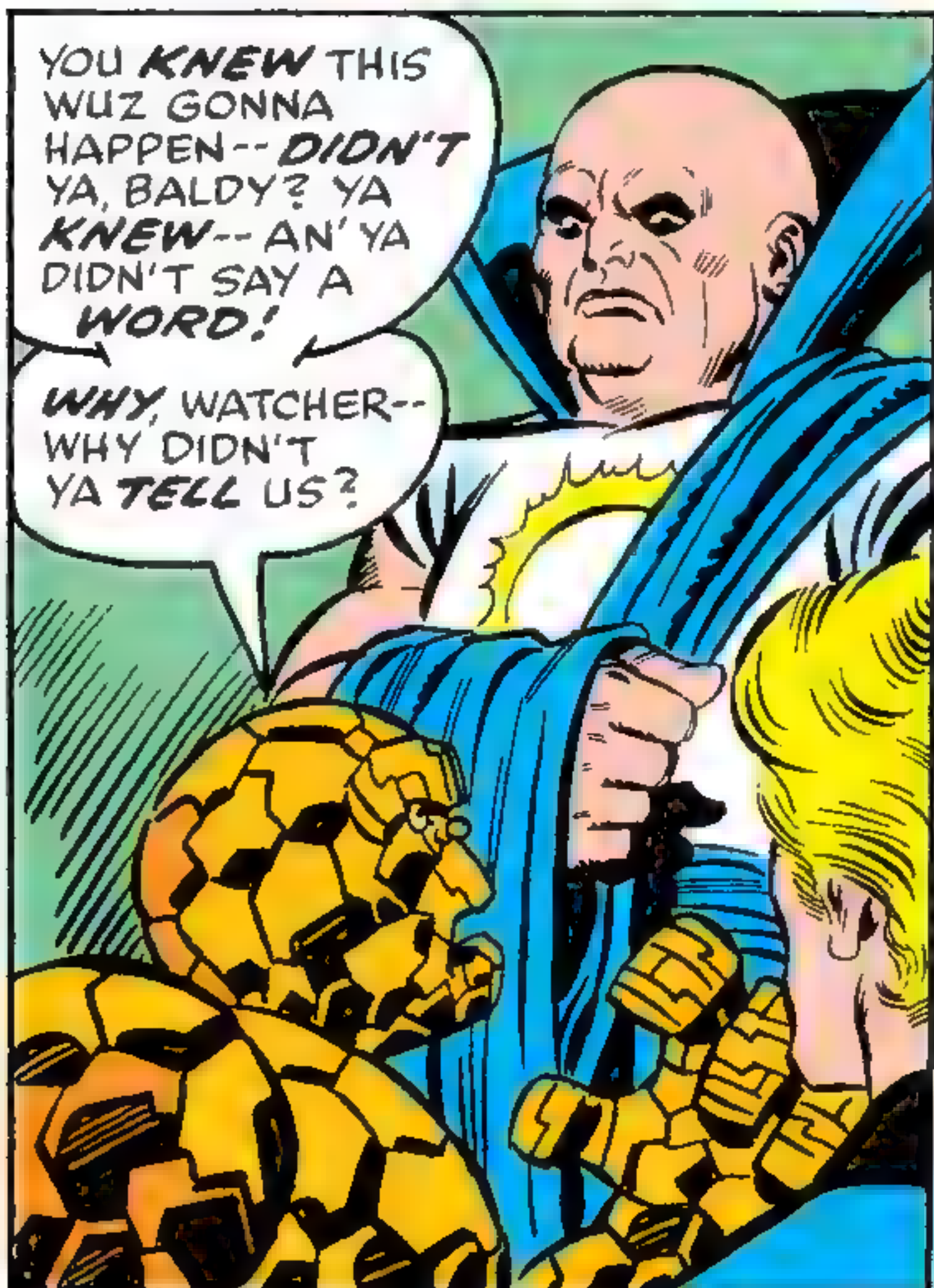
...RIGHT, SUE?



YOU **BET** YOU'RE RIGHT, LITTLE BROTHER! I'VE ALREADY DESERTED MY HUSBAND **ONCE**! *

I'LL BE **DAMNED** IF I'LL DO IT AGAIN!

*BACK IN FF #130. --LEN.



YOU **KNEW** THIS WUZ GONNA HAPPEN-- **DIDN'T** YA, BALDY? YA **KNEW**-- AN' YA DIDN'T SAY A **WORD**!

WHY, WATCHER-- WHY DIDN'T YA **TELL** US?



IF WE'D **KNOWN**, MAYBE WE COULD'A **DONE** SUMTHIN'! MAYBE WE COULD'A **HELPED**!

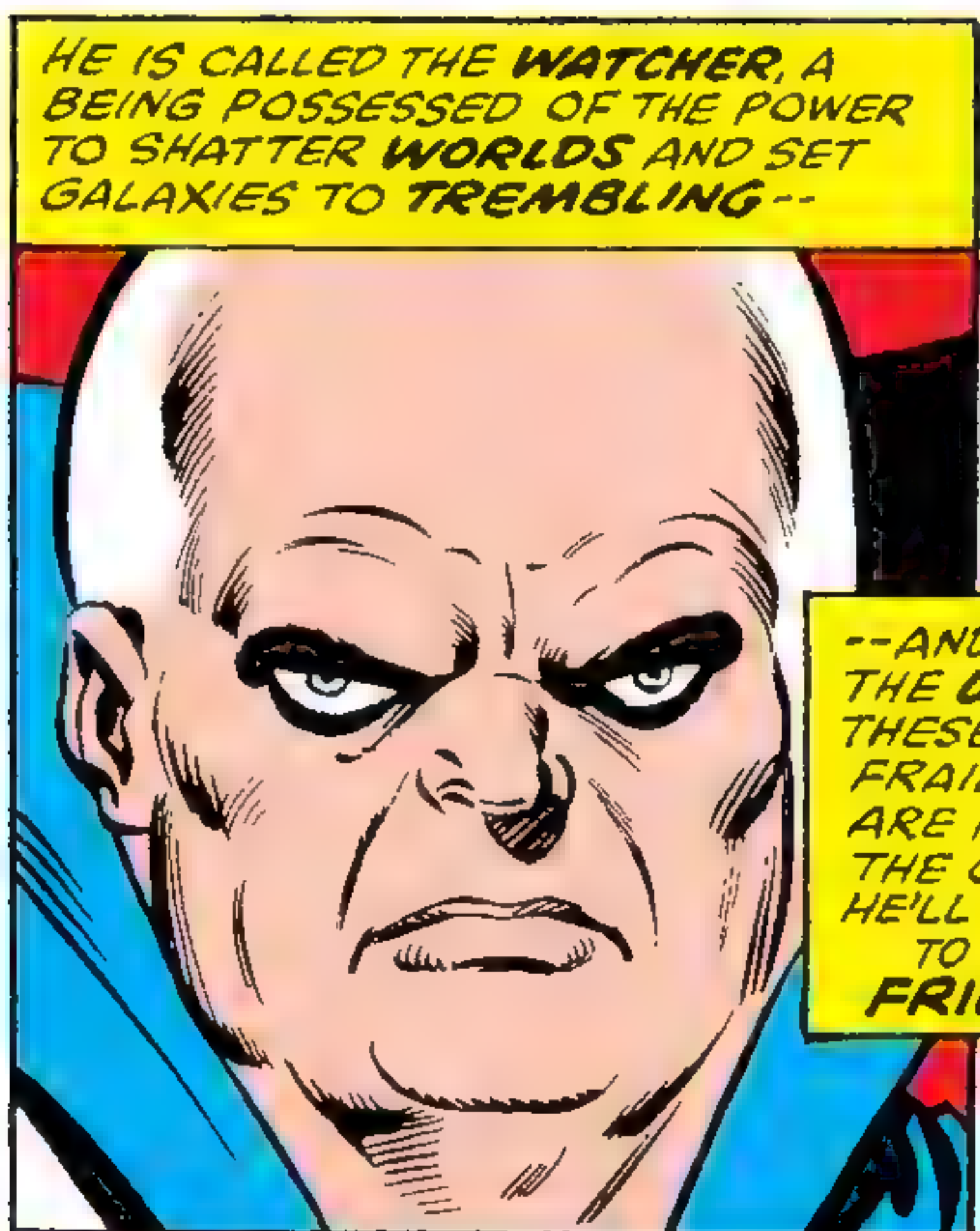
ALL IT WOULD'A TAKEN WUZ A **WORD**... JUST ONE LOUSY, STINKIN' **WORD**.

COME ON, BEN-- THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO **CHANGE** ANYTHING NOW.



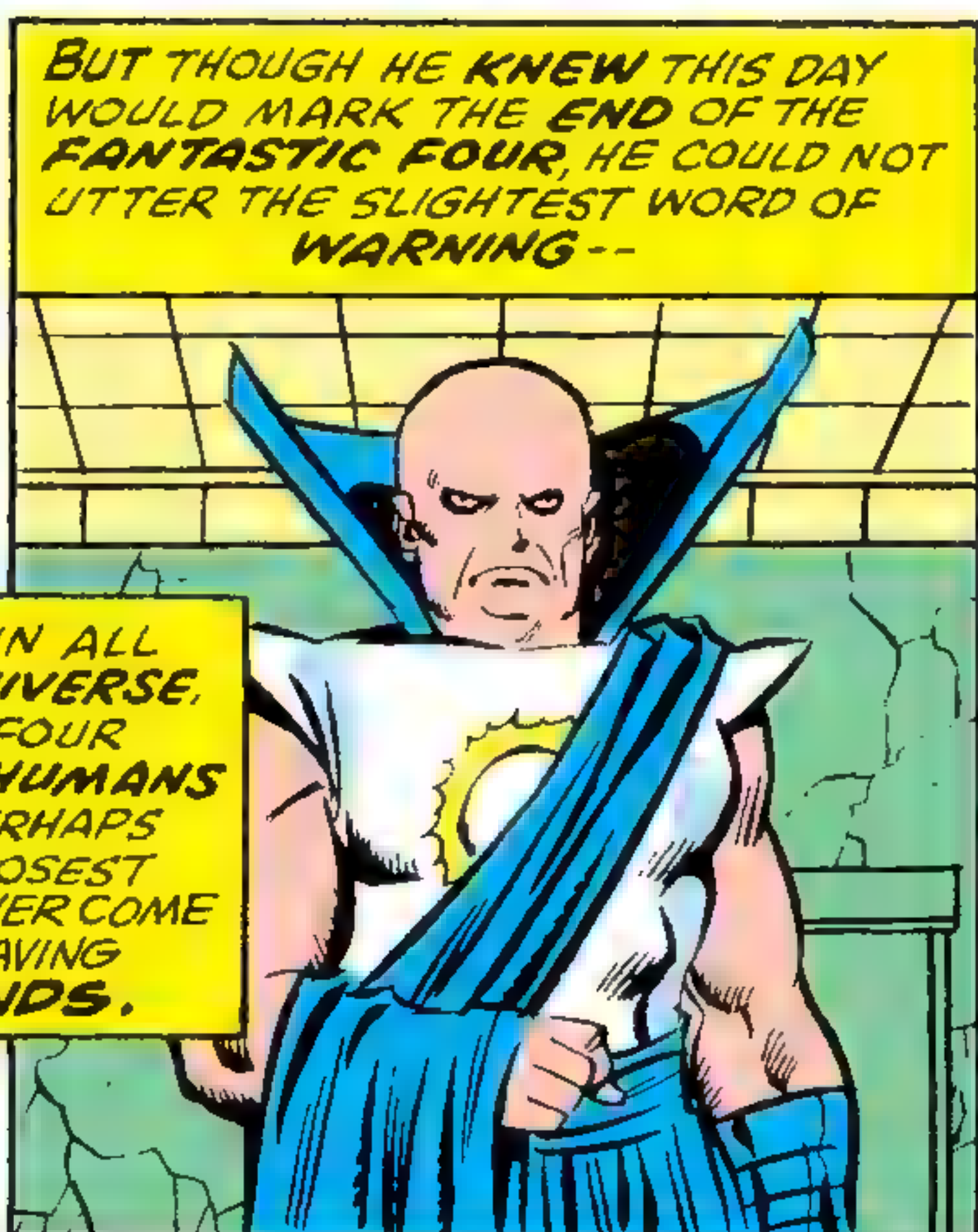
MAYBE, WHEN IT COMES RIGHT **DOWN** TO IT, THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING **ANY** OF US COULD DO.

NOT EVEN **HIM**.

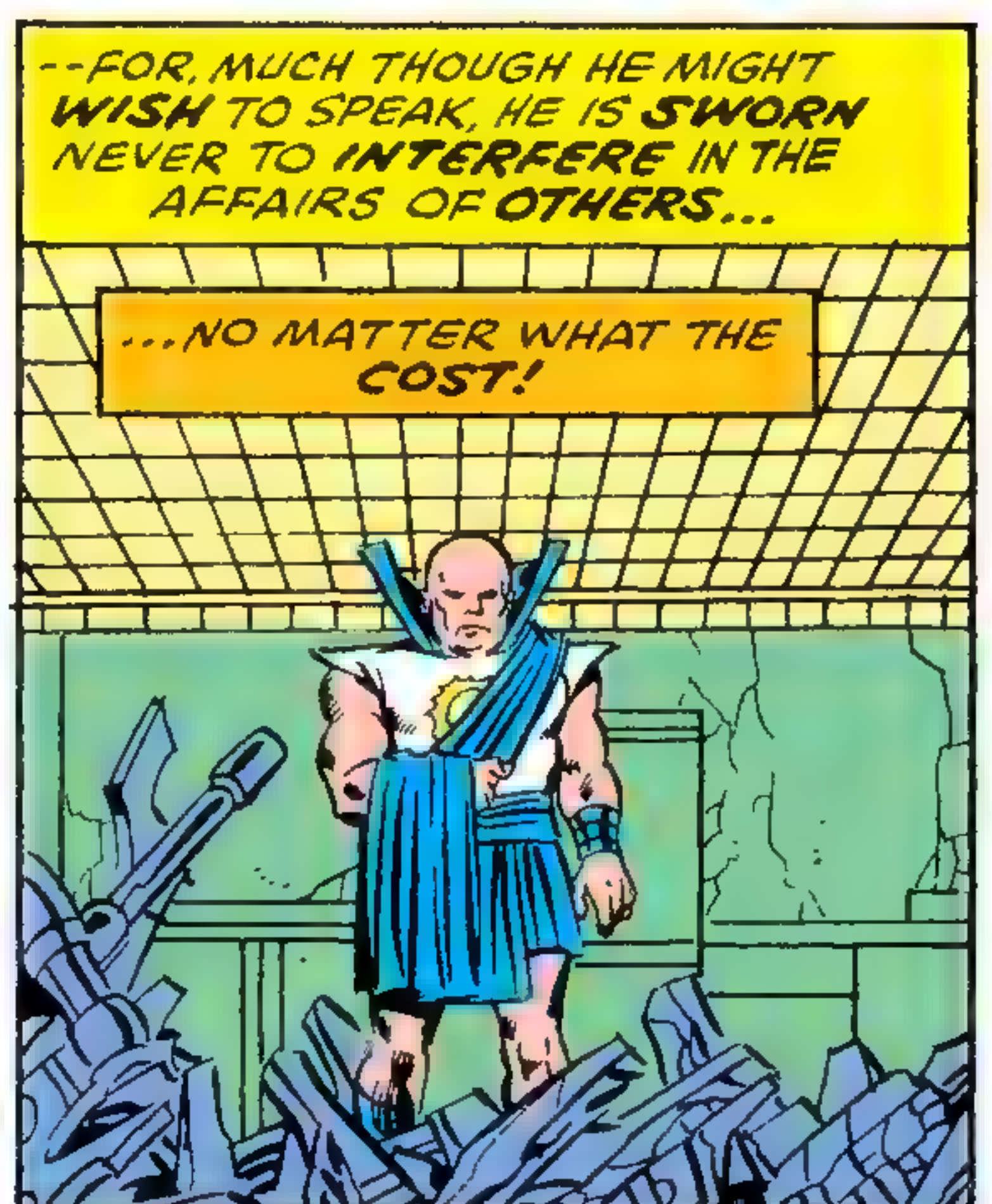


HE IS CALLED THE **WATCHER**, A BEING POSSESSED OF THE POWER TO SHATTER **WORLDS** AND SET GALAXIES TO **TREMBLING**--

--AND, IN ALL THE **UNIVERSE**, THESE FOUR **FRAIL HUMANS** ARE PERHAPS THE CLOSEST HE'LL EVER COME TO HAVING **FRIENDS**.



BUT THOUGH HE **KNEW** THIS DAY WOULD MARK THE **END** OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**, HE COULD NOT UTTER THE SLIGHTEST WORD OF **WARNING**--



--FOR, MUCH THOUGH HE MIGHT **WISH** TO SPEAK, HE IS **SWORN** NEVER TO **INTERFERE** IN THE AFFAIRS OF **OTHERS**...

...NO MATTER WHAT THE **COST**!

NEXT ISSUE:

THE STORY YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SEE-- AS OUR STALWART HEROES ALL GO THEIR SEPARATE **WAYS**! BE HERE FOR...

"FOUR NO MORE!"

WE PROMISE YOU WON'T REGRET IT!

Cover from *The Fantastic Four* #189 (reprinting *The Fantastic Four Annual* #4)

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

35¢

CC

189

DEC

02462

©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]



THE STORY THAT
INTRODUCES THE
WEIRD WONDER OF
QUASIMODO!

RE-PRESENTING
ONE OF THE MOST
DEVASTATING DUELS
IN MARVEL HISTORY!
**JOHNNY STORM
BATTLES
"THE TORCH
THAT WAS!"**

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



35¢

190
JAN

02462



©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]

ALL-NEW
ALBUM
ISSUE!

"THE WAY IT WAS!"



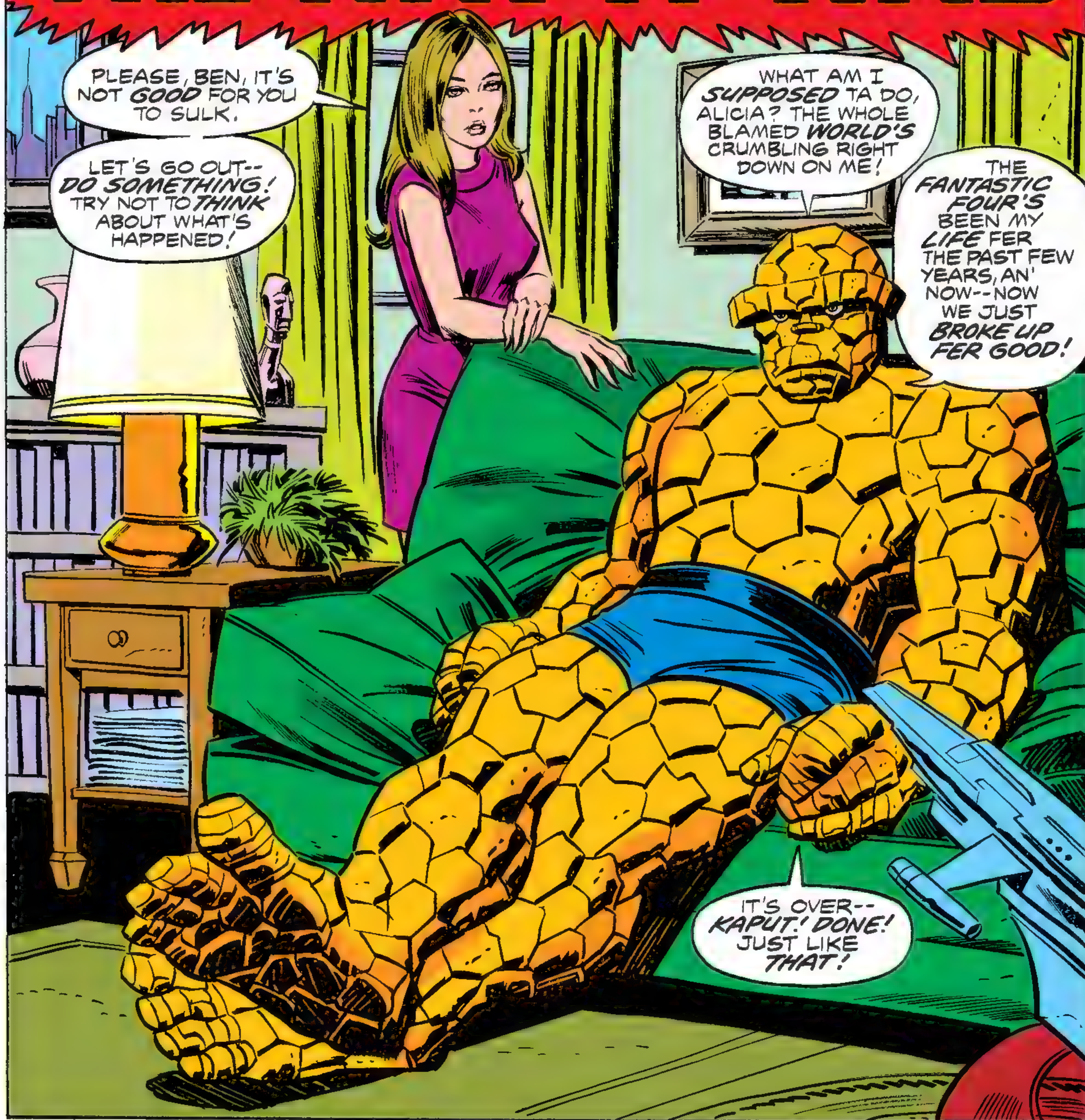
A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human!

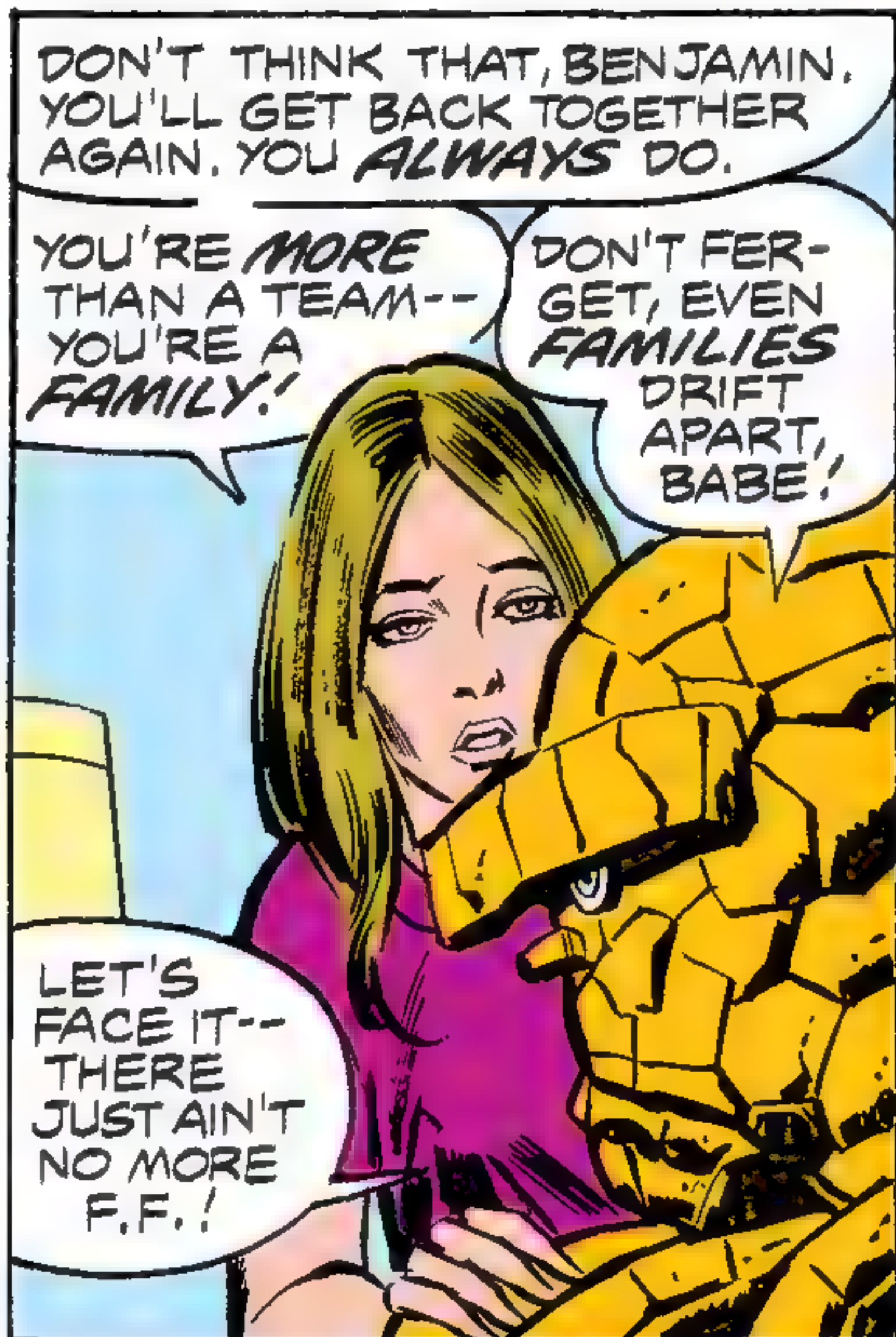
MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

MARV WOLFGMAN / SAL BUSCEMA / TONY DEZUNIGA / J. COSTANZA, letterer / STAN LEE
WRITER / EDITOR LAYOUTS FINISHES GLYNIS WEIN, colorist INSPIRATION

THE WAY IT WAS





DON'T THINK THAT, BENJAMIN. YOU'LL GET BACK TOGETHER AGAIN. YOU *ALWAYS* DO.

YOU'RE *MORE* THAN A TEAM-- YOU'RE A *FAMILY*!

DON'T FER-GET, EVEN *FAMILIES* DRIFT APART, BABE!

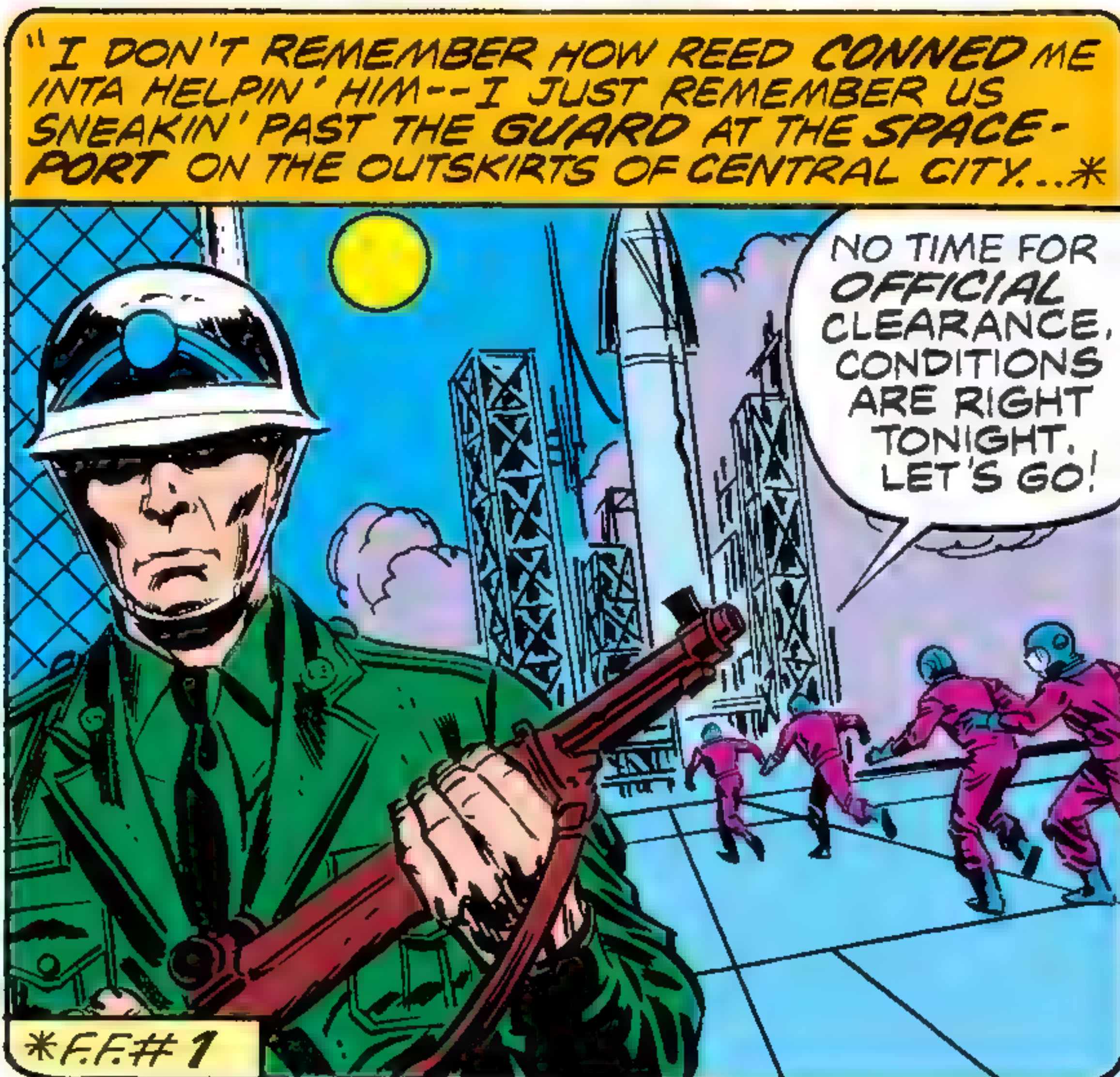
LET'S FACE IT-- THERE JUST AIN'T NO MORE F.F.!



BABE, I NEVER TOLD NO ONE ABOUT THIS, MEBBE 'CAUSE I THOUGHT YOU'D ALL *LAUGH*-- BUT I KEPT ME A *DIARY* OF ALL THE GOOD TIMES... AN' ALL THE *BAD*!



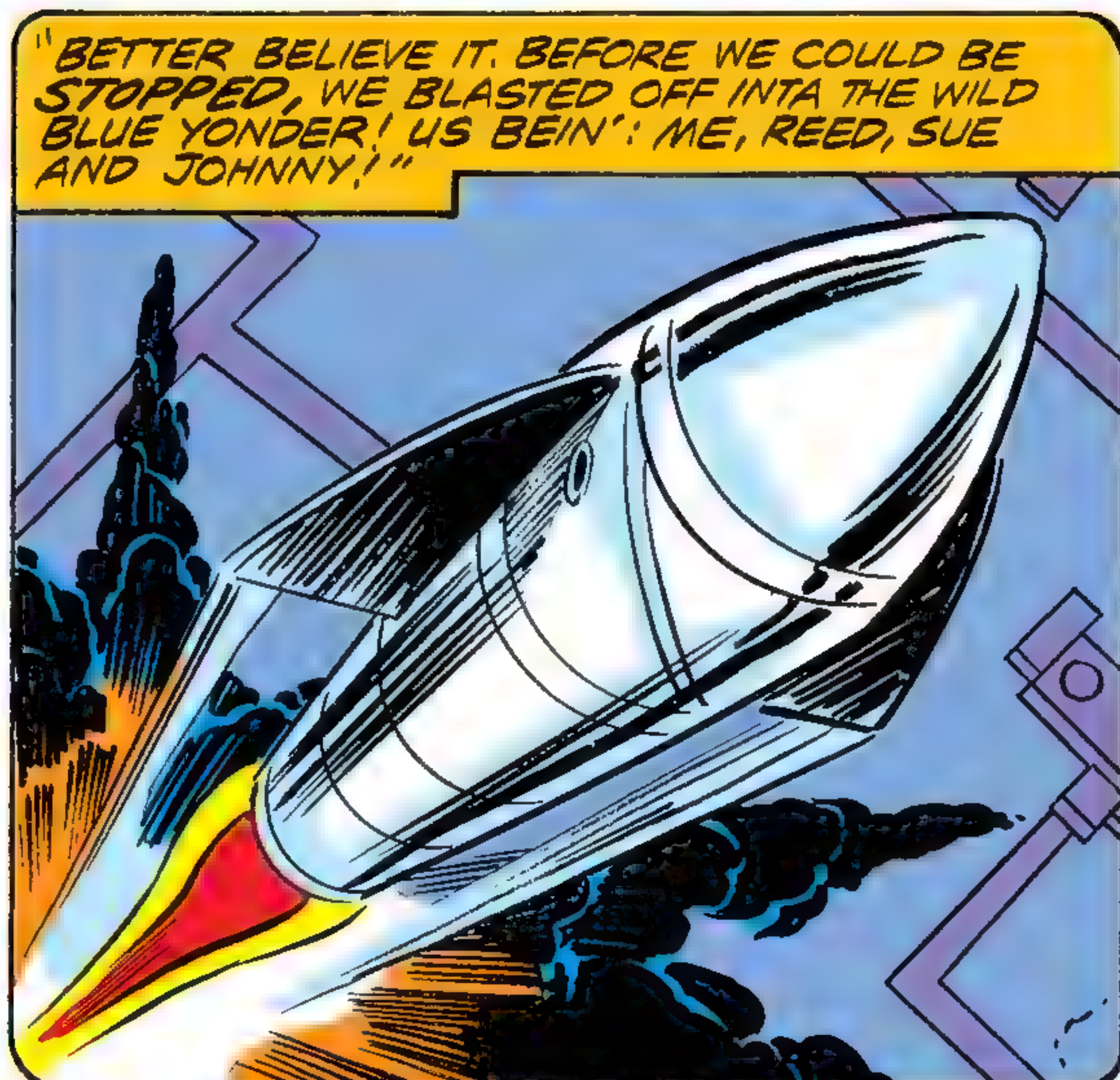
FUNNY, IT BEGAN *YEARS* AGO, BUT IT FEELS JUST LIKE *YESTERDAY*!



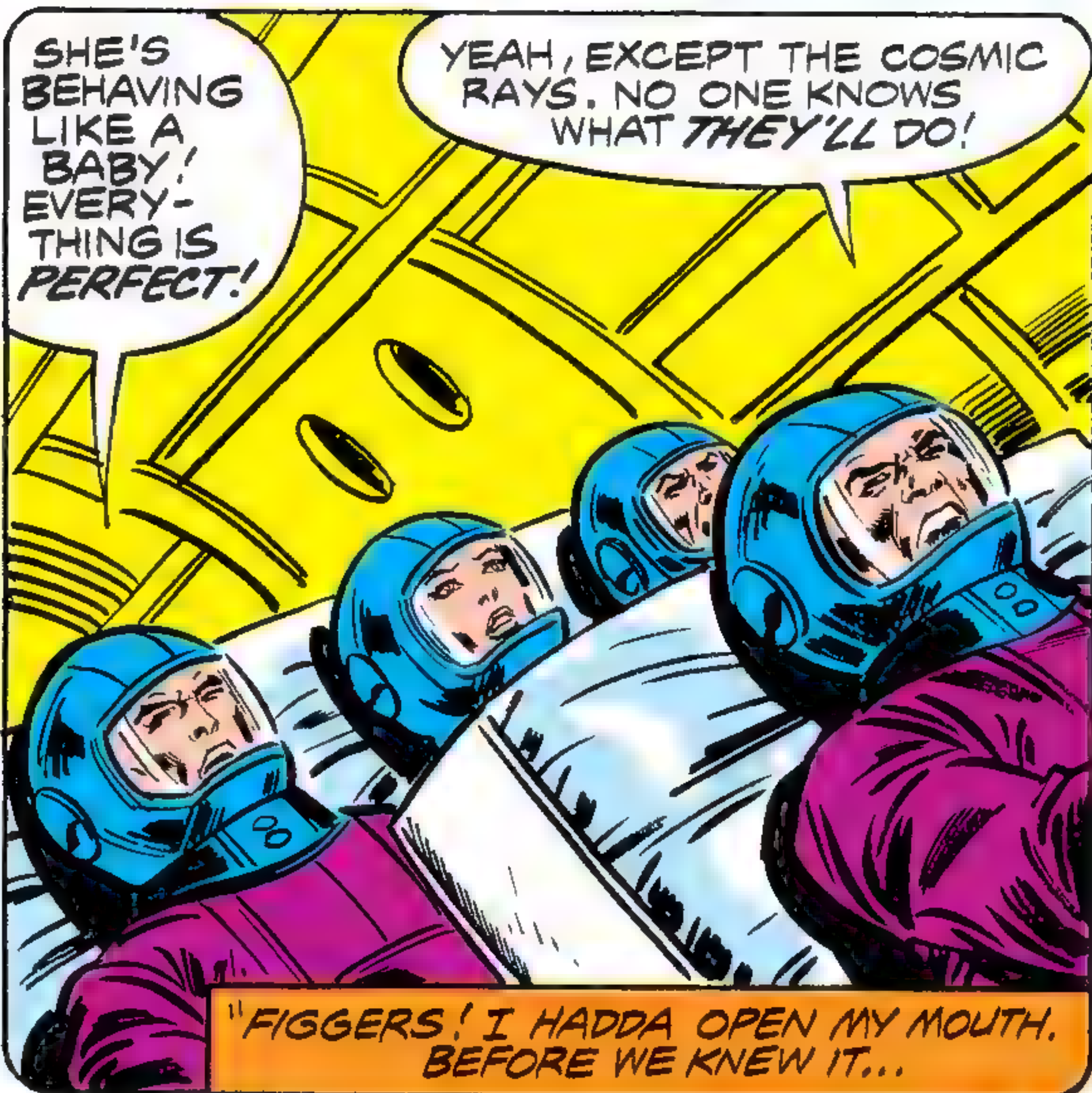
"I DON'T REMEMBER HOW REED *CONNED* ME INTA HELPIN' HIM-- I JUST REMEMBER US *SNEAKIN'* PAST THE *GUARD* AT THE *SPACE-PORT* ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CENTRAL CITY...*

NO TIME FOR *OFFICIAL* CLEARANCE. CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT TONIGHT. LET'S GO!

*F.F.# 1



"BETTER BELIEVE IT. BEFORE WE COULD BE *STOPPED*, WE BLASTED OFF INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER! US BEIN': ME, REED, SUE AND JOHNNY!"



SHE'S BEHAVING LIKE A *BABY*! EVERY-THING IS *PERFECT*!

YEAH, EXCEPT THE *COSMIC* RAYS. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT *THEY'LL* DO!

"*FIGGERS*! I HADDA OPEN MY MOUTH, BEFORE WE KNEW IT..."



HEAR *THAT*? IT'S THE *COSMIC* RAYS!! I--I *WARNED* YOU ABOUT 'EM!

THEY'RE PENE-TRATING OUR SHIP!! OUR *SHIELDING* ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH!

BUT I DON'T *FEEL* ANYTHING!

NATURALLY! THEY'RE ONLY RAYS OF *LIGHT*! YOU CAN'T FEEL 'EM-- BUT THEY'LL *AFFECT* YOU JUST THE SAME!

"THAT WUZN'T NO BIG BOFFO, EITHER. THE SHIP'S AUTO PILOT LANDED US SAFE-- BUT WE WUZ HARDLY SOUND!"

"SUE CLUTCHED HER LITTLE FACE IN HER HANDS--AND SUDDENLY SHE BECAME AN--

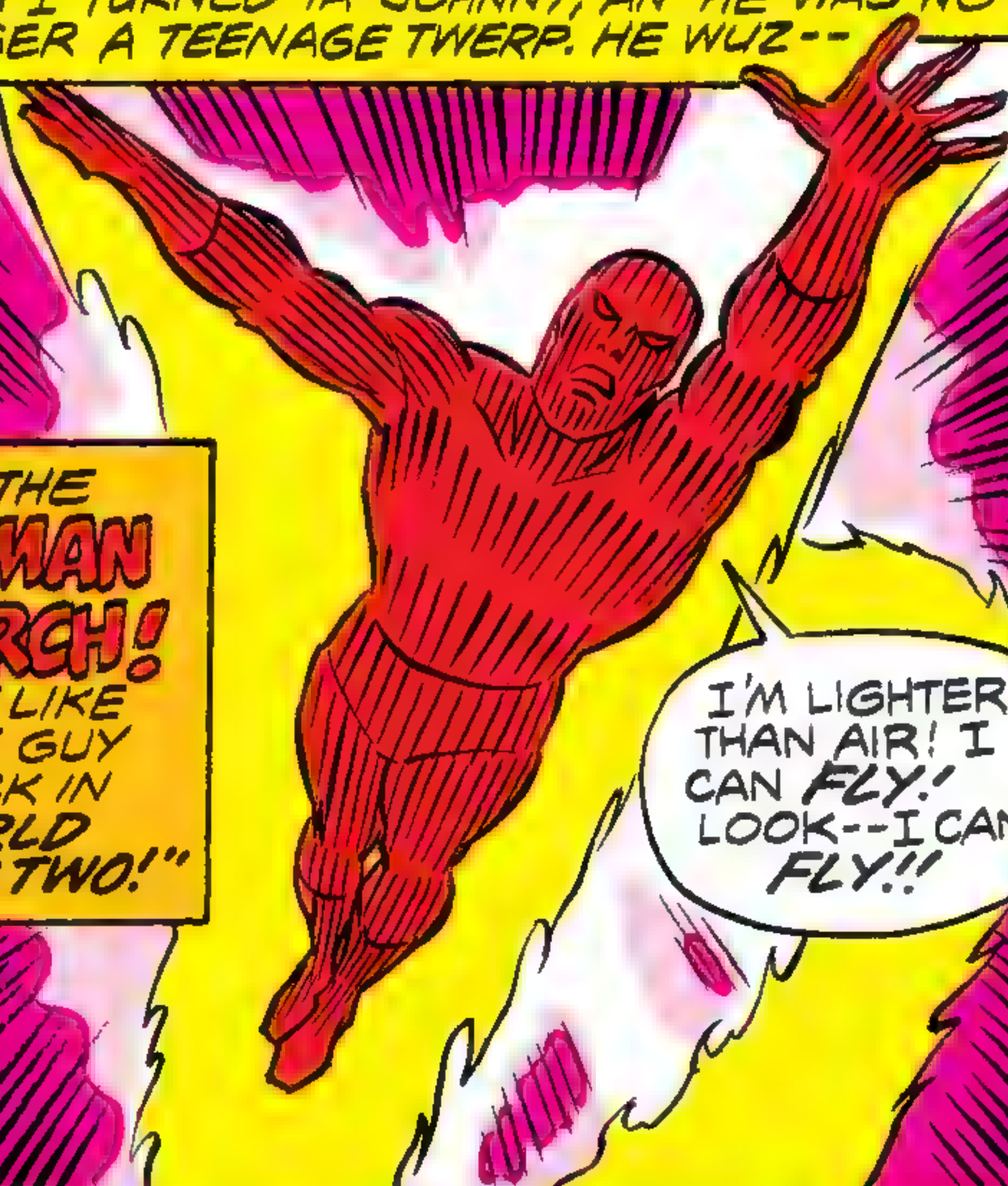
= INVISIBLE GIRL!



"THEN I TURNED TA JOHNNY, AN' HE WAS NO LONGER A TEENAGE TWERP. HE WUZ--

--THE
**HUMAN
TORCH!**
JUST LIKE
THAT GUY
BACK IN
WORLD
WAR TWO!"

I'M LIGHTER
THAN AIR! I
CAN FLY!
LOOK--I CAN
FLY!!



"REED, MEBBE 'CAUSE HE WUZ ALWAYS STRETCHIN' THAT THINK-CAP OF HIS-- BUT EVERY PART A' HIM STARTED STRETCHIN'--



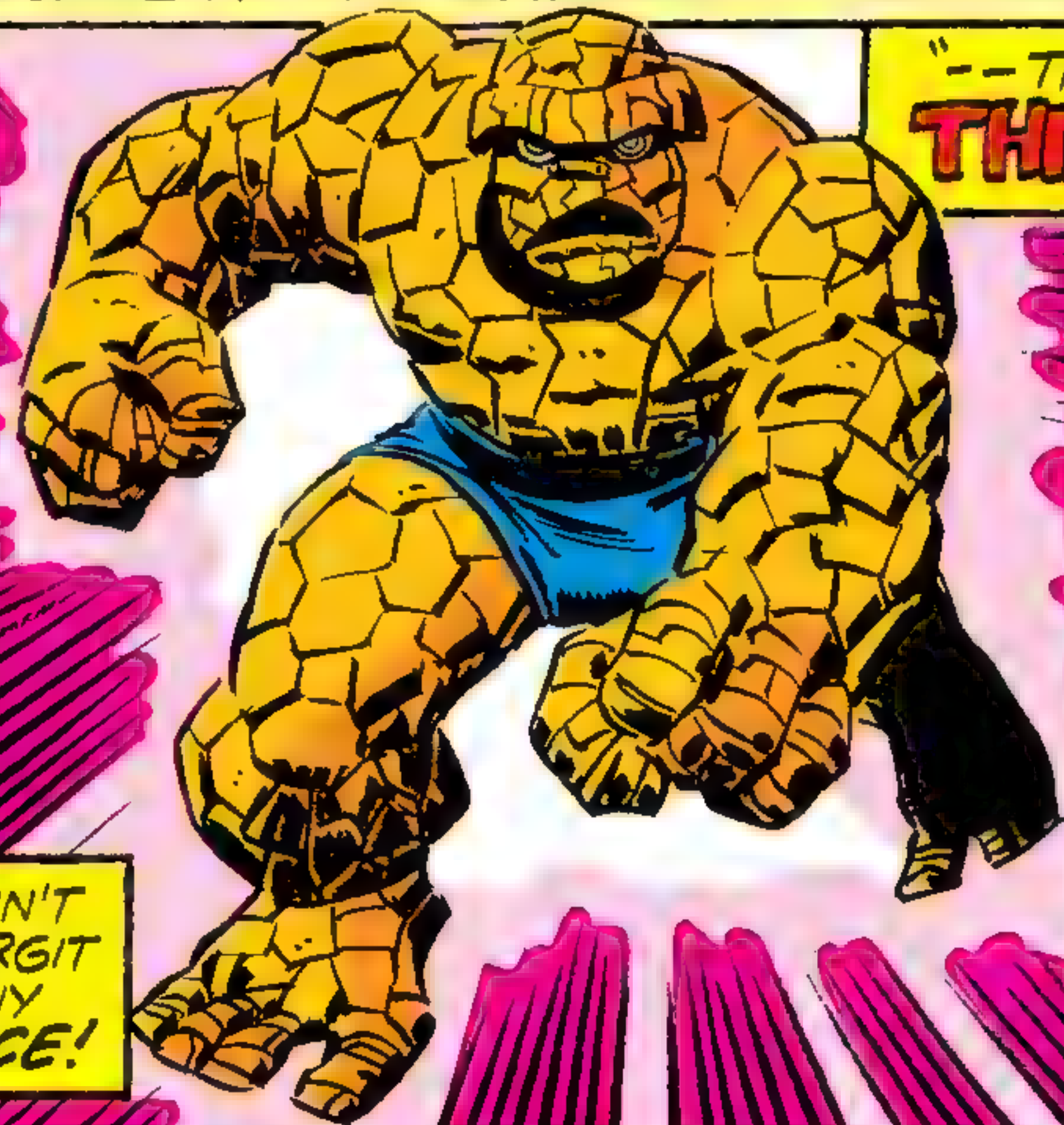
"LOOK, DON'T ASK ME WHY, BUT BIG-DOME DECIDED TA CALL HIMSELF--

**MISTER
FANTASTIC!**

"AN' WE AIN'T LET 'IM FERGIT THAT CORNY NAME SINCE!"

"THEY BECAME PEOPLE WITH POWERS THEY COULD TURN ON AN' OFF-- BUT ME... ME-- I BECAME A-- A CREATURE... I BECAME--

--THE
THING!



AN' I'M REMINDED A' THAT EVERY TIME I GOTTA LOOK AT MY ROCKY ORANGE MUG IN THE MIRROR!

BEN, HAVEN'T I ALREADY TOLD YOU-- IT'S WHAT IS INSIDE THE MAN THAT COUNTS

SURE, BABE-- WHATEVER YA SAY. ANYWAY, THAT'S HOW WE GOT TO-GETHER AN' BECAME THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

BUT WE ALMOST BROKE UP AT THE SAME TIME... JUST A LITTLE WHILE LATER!

"BACK THEN, BEFORE THE COSMIC RAYS TOTALLY CHANGED ME, I LOOKED LIKE A BIG ORANGE GUMBY-- OUTFITTED WITH A SIZE TEN-THOUSAND TEMPER!"

"AN' WHAT SET ME OFF ALMOST ALL THE TIME WAS THE TORCH'S TEENAGE TRICKS!"

YA CRUMMY LITTLE PUNK, I'LL MASSACRE YA FER THAT!

JUST TRY IT, BIG MAN!



"YEAH, WE FOUGHT EACH OTHER ALMOST AS MUCH AS WE CLOBBERED THE CREEPOS WE HUNTED."

"BUT THEN, RIGHT AFTER WE STOPPED THIS GOOFBALL WHO CALLED HIMSELF-- THE MIRACLE MAN--*"

I HAD ALL THE BOSSIN' AROUND I CAN TAKE! I'M CUTTIN' OUT OF THIS COMBO RIGHT NOW!

IT'S TOO LATE, SUE!

AHHH, GOOD RIDDANCE, I SAY!

TORCH! COME BACK! PLEASE!!

FF#3--MARV

"THE KID TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, HE FOUND HIMSELF IN THE BOWERY..."

THIS IS ONE PLACE WHERE NOBODY'LL FIND ME! I'LL JUST LOSE MYSELF AMONG ALL THE OTHER HUMAN DERELICTS HERE!

MIGHT AS WELL FIND A PLACE TO SACK DOWN FOR THE NIGHT! I GUESS THIS ONE IS NO WORSE THAN THE OTHERS!

*F.F.#4--M.W.

"BUT, AS THE MATCHSTICK WENT UPSTAIRS..."

SHOW US HOW STRONG YOU ARE, OLD MAN!

GO AWAY, YOU PUNY FLEAS!

I SAID, GO AWAY... ALL OF YOU!

"THOSE CRUDS WANTED TO GANG UP ON THE OLD GUY, BUT TORCHY HELD 'EM BACK."

HE'S LOST HIS MEMORY, SO--

FIRST, WE'VE GOTTA SEE WHAT HE REALLY LOOKS LIKE!

SO LET'S GIVE 'IM A LITTLE SHAVE!

FLAME ON!

HOLY COW! IT'S THE-- HUMAN TORCH!

SEE HOW SIMPLE IT IS WHEN YOU KNOW HOW?

WAIT! HIS FACE! NO--IT CAN'T BE!!

IT IS! IT IS! HE-- HE'S THE SUB-MARINER!

"WE HADDA FIGHT AFTER HE GOT BACK HIS MEMORY-- ALL A' US AGAINST THAT SKINNY LITTLE FISH-BREATHER!"

"ONLY HE WUZN'T ALONE! HE SENT SEA BEASTS AFTER US, BUT WE FOUGHT 'EM ALL DOWN!"

YOU HAVEN'T BEATEN ME YET! AS LONG AS I HAVE THIS HORN, I CAN SUMMON COUNTLESS OTHER SEA MONSTERS TO ATTACK YOU!

SO! IT IS THE HORN THAT DOES IT! THAT'S WHAT I WAS WAITING TO HEAR!

WHA--?!!

I'VE GOT TO GET TO THE OTHERS! I'VE GOT TO!

AH!! I THOUGHT SO! IT'S A HUMAN! AN INVISIBLE HUMAN!

STOP STRUGGLING! NO ONE CAN ESCAPE PRINCE NAMOR!

"SUE KNEW SHE COULDN'T FIGHT FISHY, SO--"

WELL! HERE IS A PRIZE WORTH CATCHING!

YOU'RE THE LOVELIEST HUMAN I'VE EVER SEEN! IF YOU WILL BE MY BRIDE, I MIGHT SHOW MERCY TO THE REST OF YOUR PITIFUL RACE!

I KNEW THEN I SHOULD SMASHED GILL-FACE, BUT HE ESCAPED, ONLY HE KEPT COMIN' BACK TA PLAGUE US!

I TELL YA, THERE WERE TIMES THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW IF WE WUZ FIGHTIN' THAT FLAT-HEADED FREAK-- OR TEAMED UP WITH 'IM!

BUT, THERE WAS ONE SCUM-CRAWLIN' CREEP I'D CLOBBER IN A SEC WITHOUT THINKIN' TWICE--

--THE FILTHIEST CRUD THE F.F. EVER TANGLED WITH--

DOCTOR DOOM!*

"FIRST TIME WE MET 'IM, HE KIDNAPPED THE WHOLE BLAMED BAXTER BUILDIN'!"

*F.F.#5--M.W.

WELL, WE SORTA **BEAT DOOM**,
AT LEAST WE **STOPPED 'IM**, AN'
WE WAS STILL A **TEAM**. BUT
THAT DIDN'T LAST **TOO LONG**.

NO SOONER DO
WE BECOME
SUPERSTARS,
THAN WE GO
BROKE!

YEAH, WE
HADDA **DIS-**
SOLVE EVERY-
THIN' JUST TA
MAKE SOME
LOOT, TILL WE
GOT US A
HOLLYWOOD
MOVIE
OFFER.*

ONLY WE
FOUND OUT
NAMOR WAS
BEHIND THAT,
AN' HE ONLY
WANTED TA
DEMOLISH
US.

*F.F. #9 --MARV W.

BUT, JUST AS WE WERE GONNA TAKE 'IM **APART...**

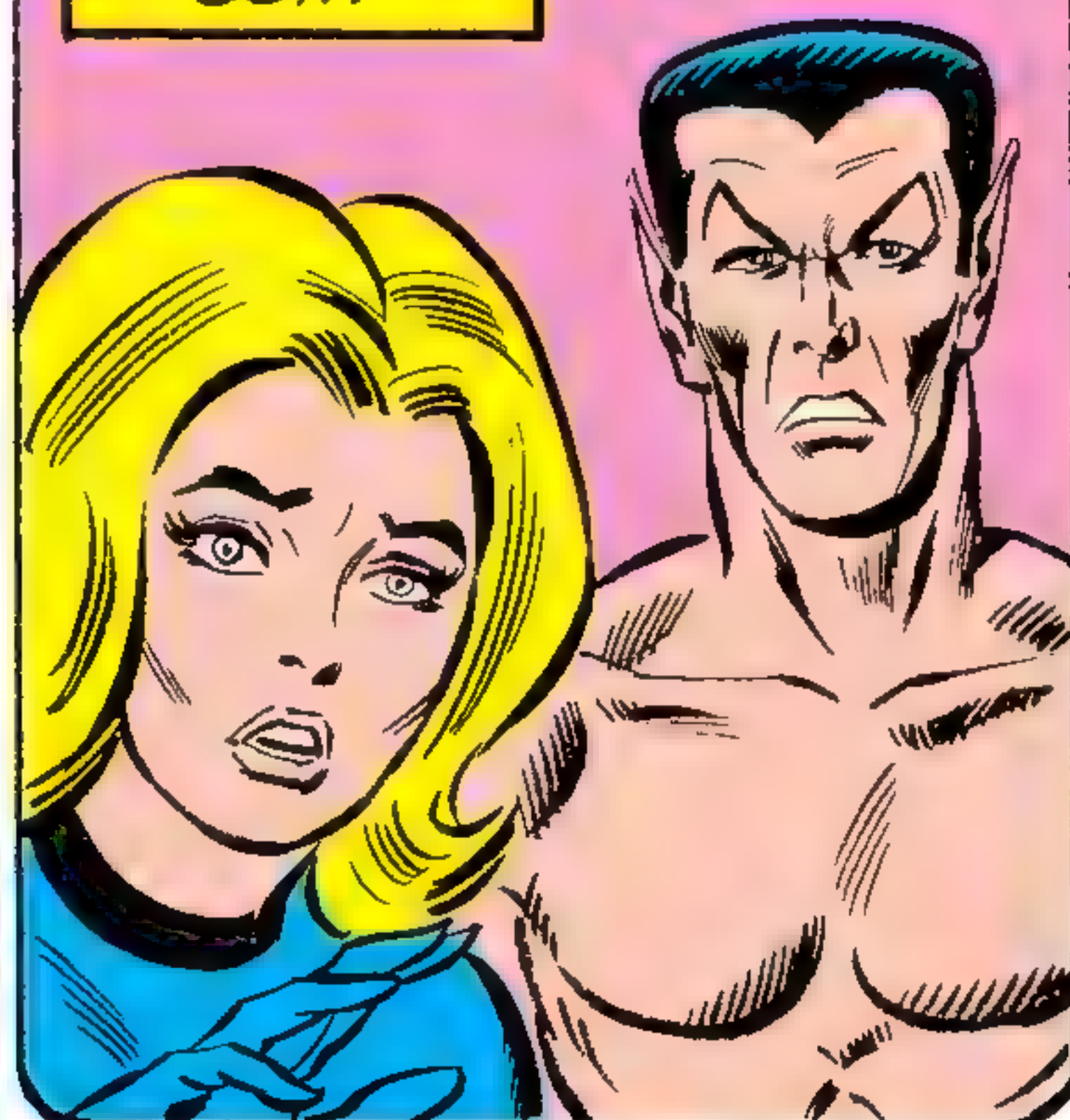
STAY
BACK, **ALL**
OF YOU...

WE MADE A **CONTRACT**
WITH **NAMOR**. **WE**
LIVED UP TO **OUR**
PART--WE COOPERATED
IN HIS MOVIE. NOW **HE**
MUST LIVE UP TO
HIS PART.



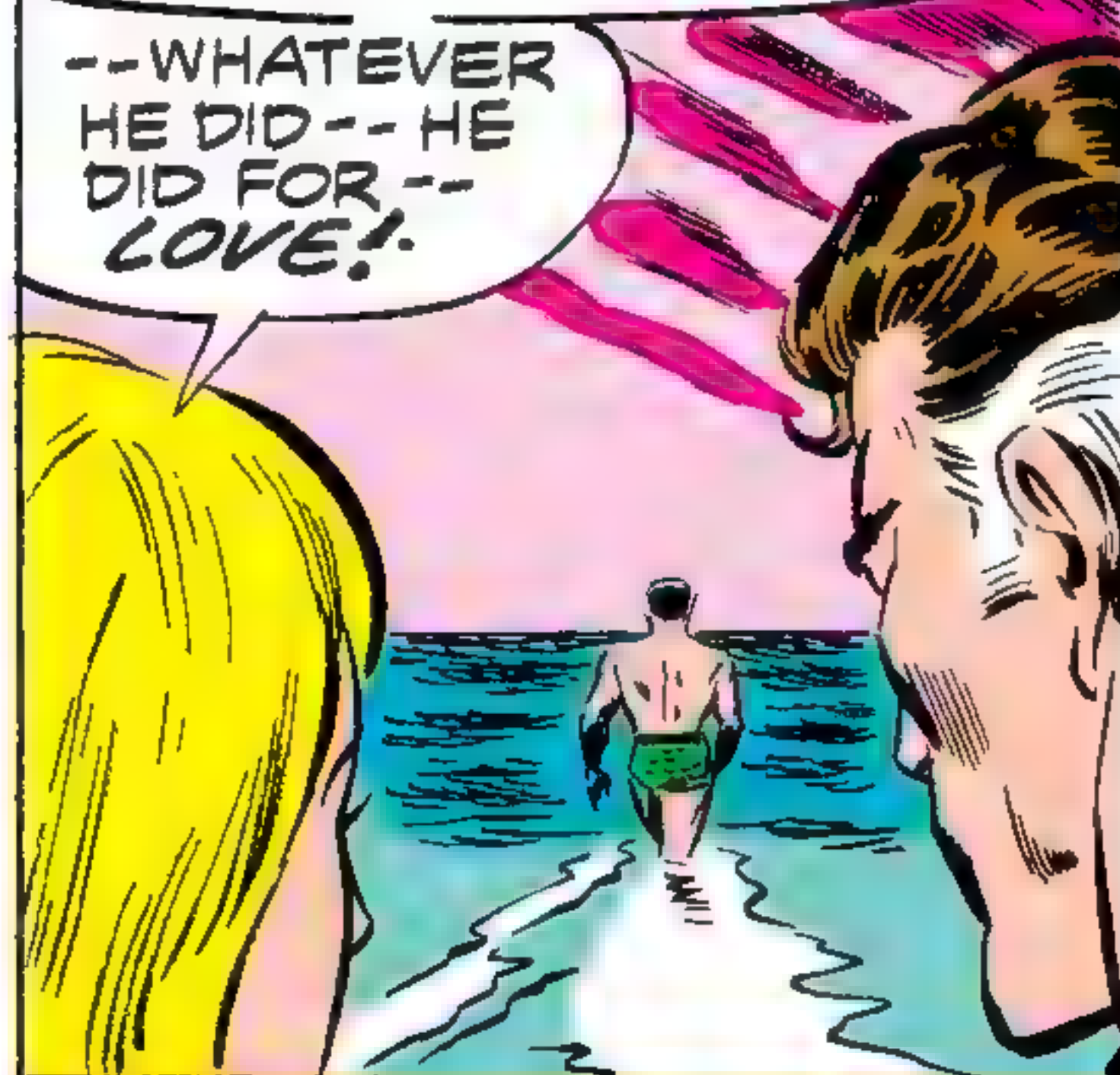
YOU WILL GET YOUR **MONEY**.

"SO WE LET
THE CREEP
GO..."



YOU DID THE RIGHT THING
AFTER ALL, HE LIVES BY A
DIFFERENT CODE THAN WE
DO. HE CAN NEVER REALLY
UNDERSTAND US. AND--

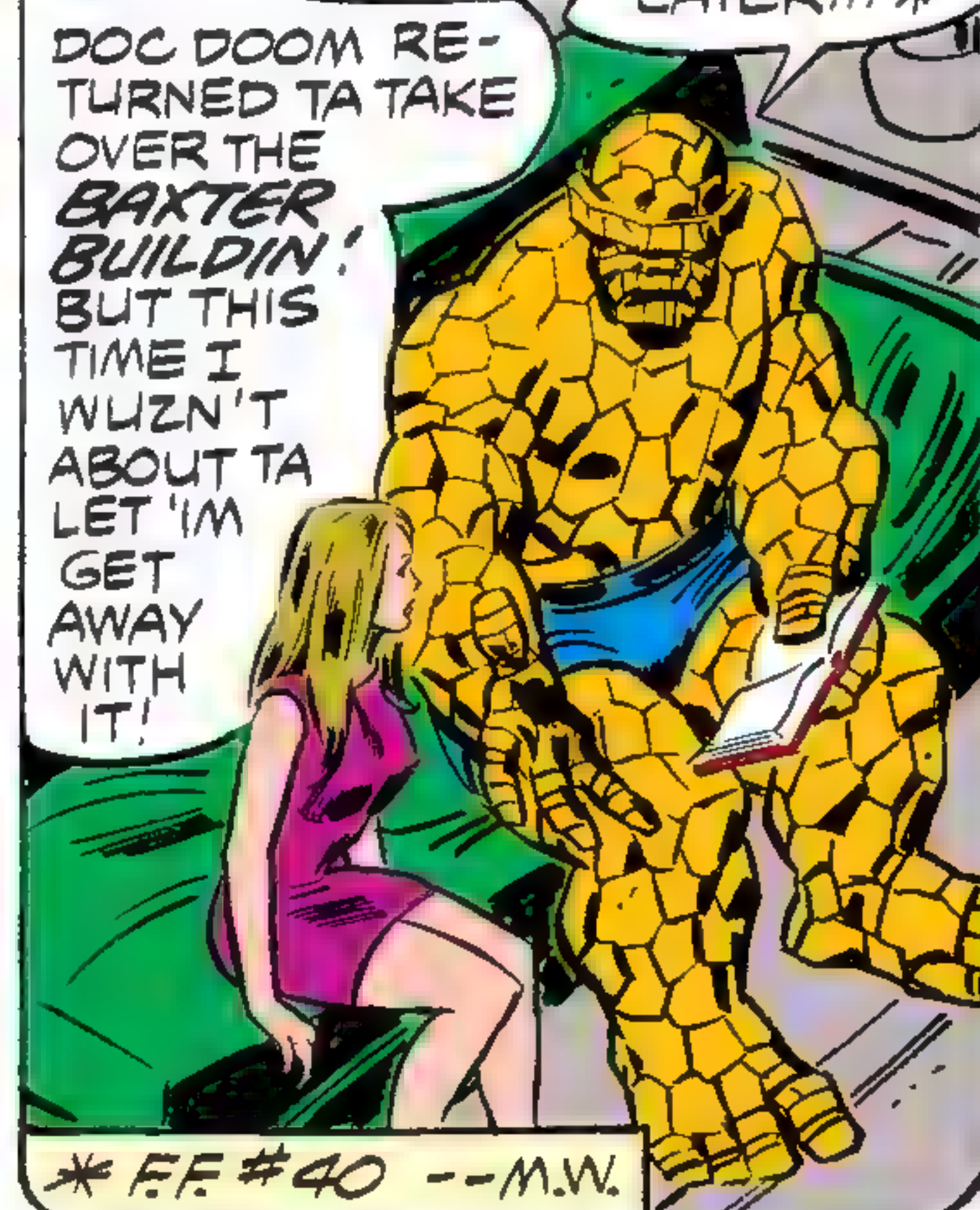
--WHATEVER
HE DID-- HE
DID FOR--
LOVE!



"YEAH, ONLY IT WAS **SUE** THAT
FISH-FACE LOVED, AN' I TELL YA,
BABE, IT ALMOST TORE US APART.

ONLY THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN
THEN, YA SEE, I ALMOST DID
THAT MYSELF, A FEW MONTHS
LATER... *

DOC DOOM RE-
TURNED TA TAKE
OVER THE
BAXTER
BUILDIN'.
BUT THIS
TIME I
WUZN'T
ABOUT TA
LET 'IM
GET
AWAY
WITH
IT!

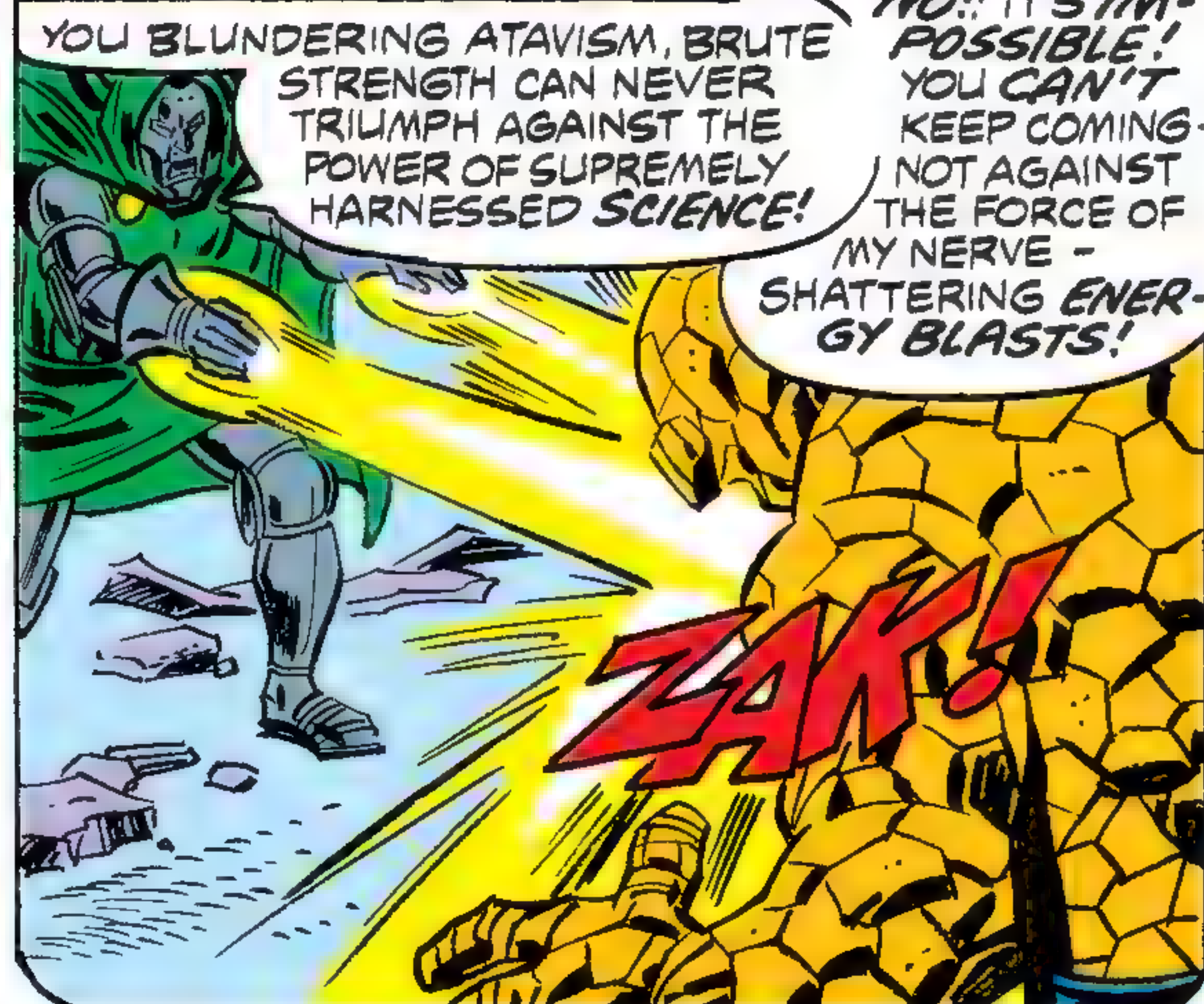


* F.F. #40 --M.W.

"THIS TIME I WAS READY TA **CREAM** THAT
ARMORED FINK AN' **STUFF** HIS VISOR DOWN
HIS BIG METAL **MOUTH**."

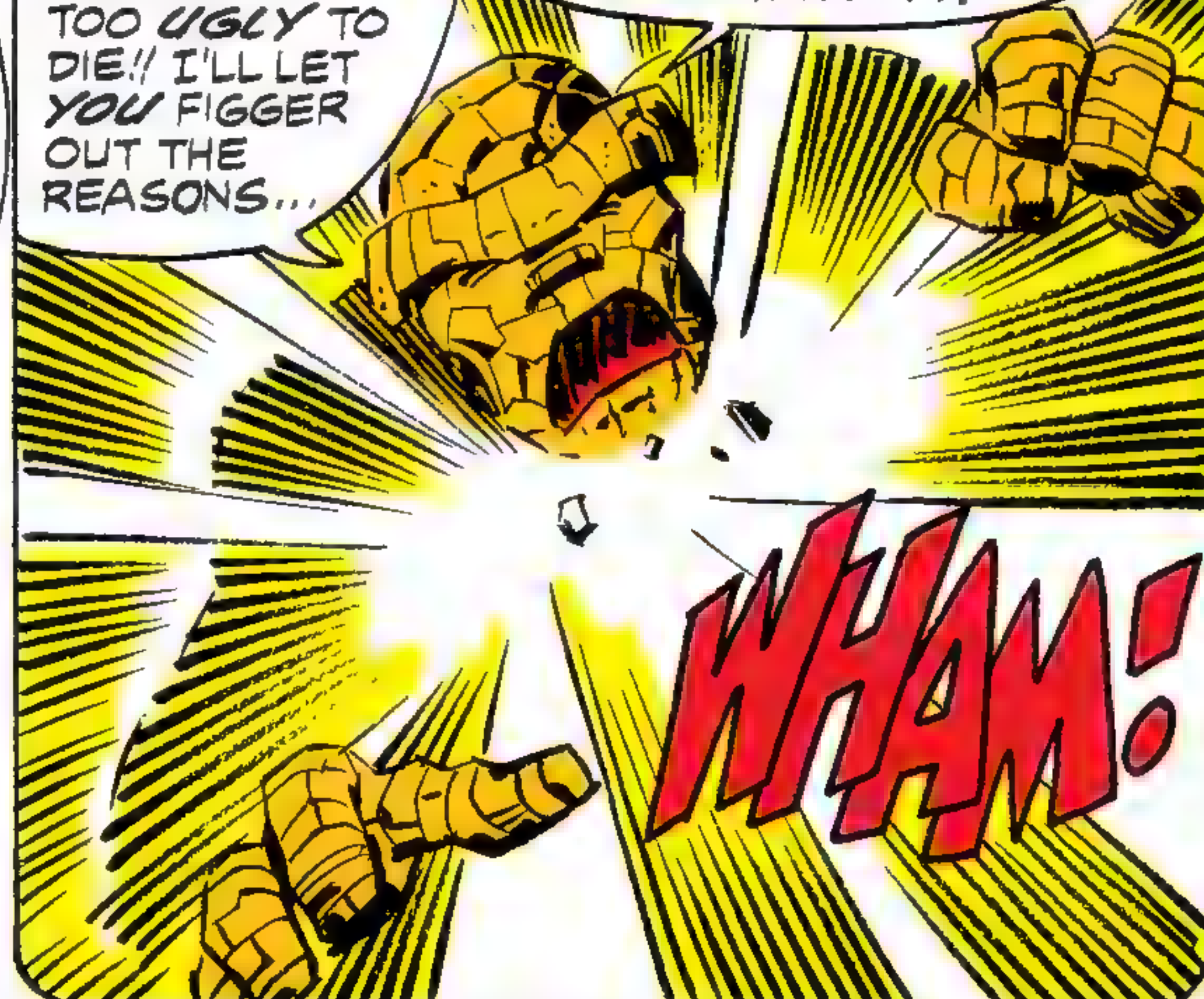
YOU BLUNDERING ATAVISM, BRUTE
STRENGTH CAN NEVER
TRIUMPH AGAINST THE
POWER OF SUPREMELY
HARNESSED **SCIENCE!**

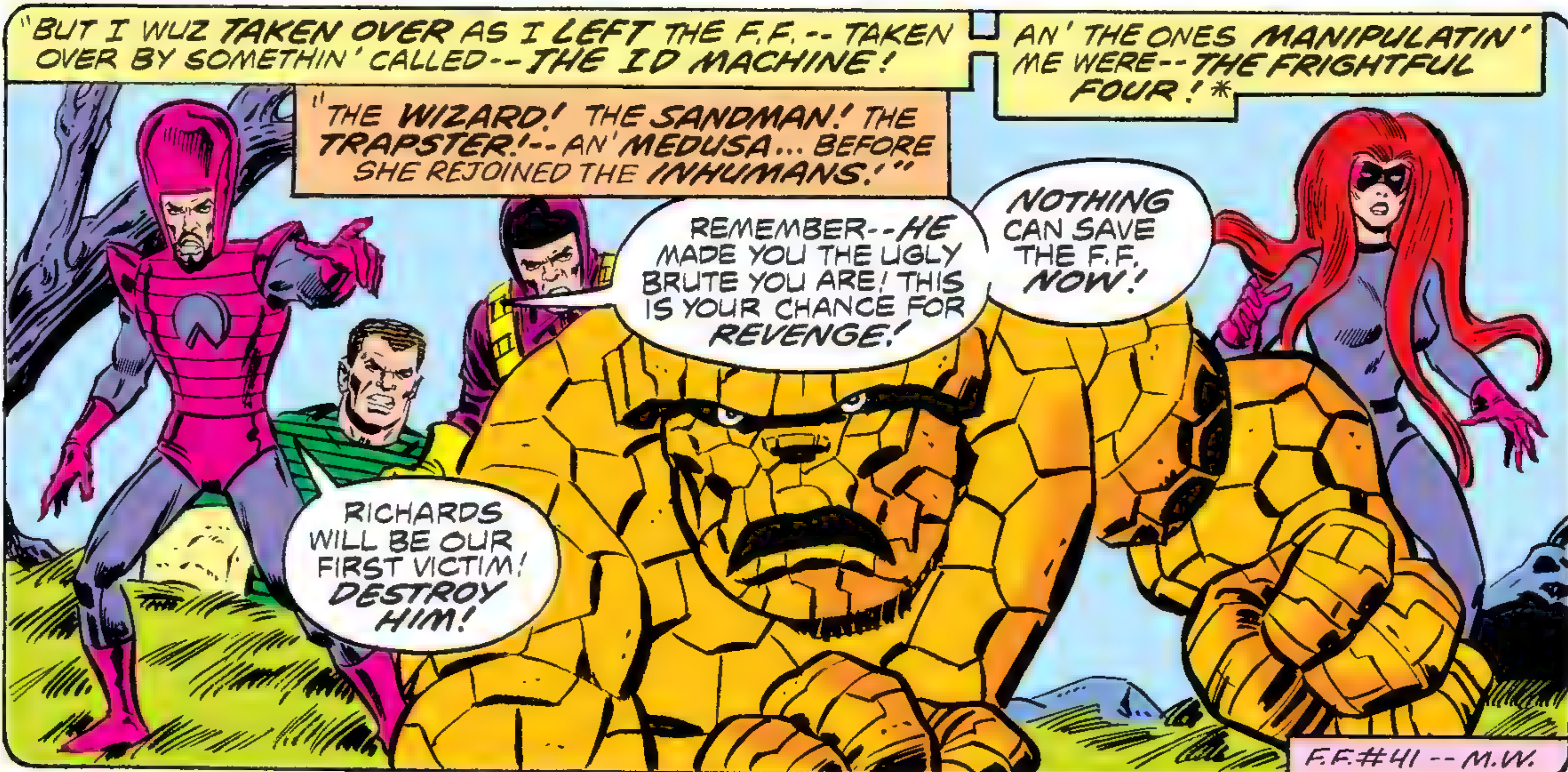
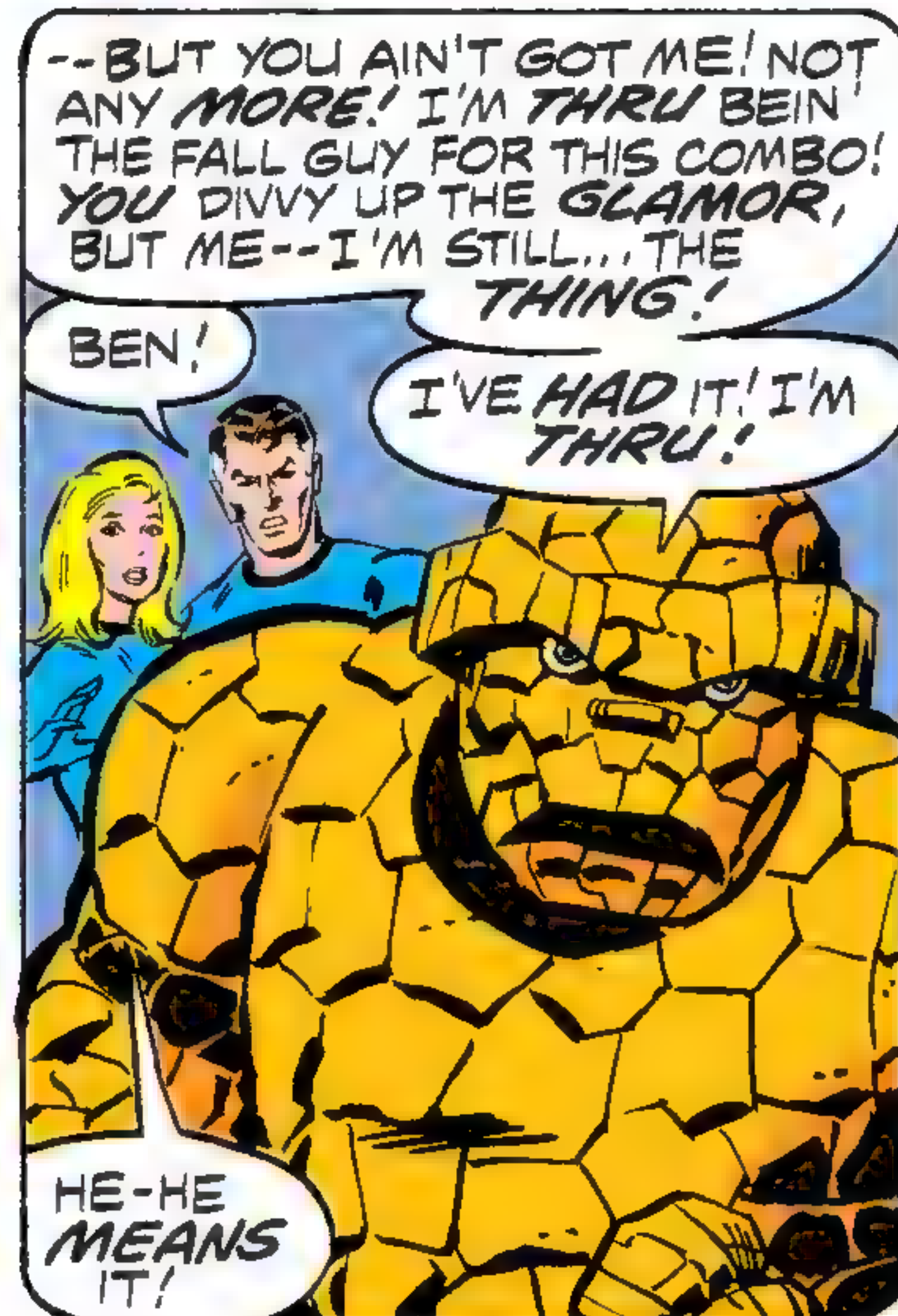
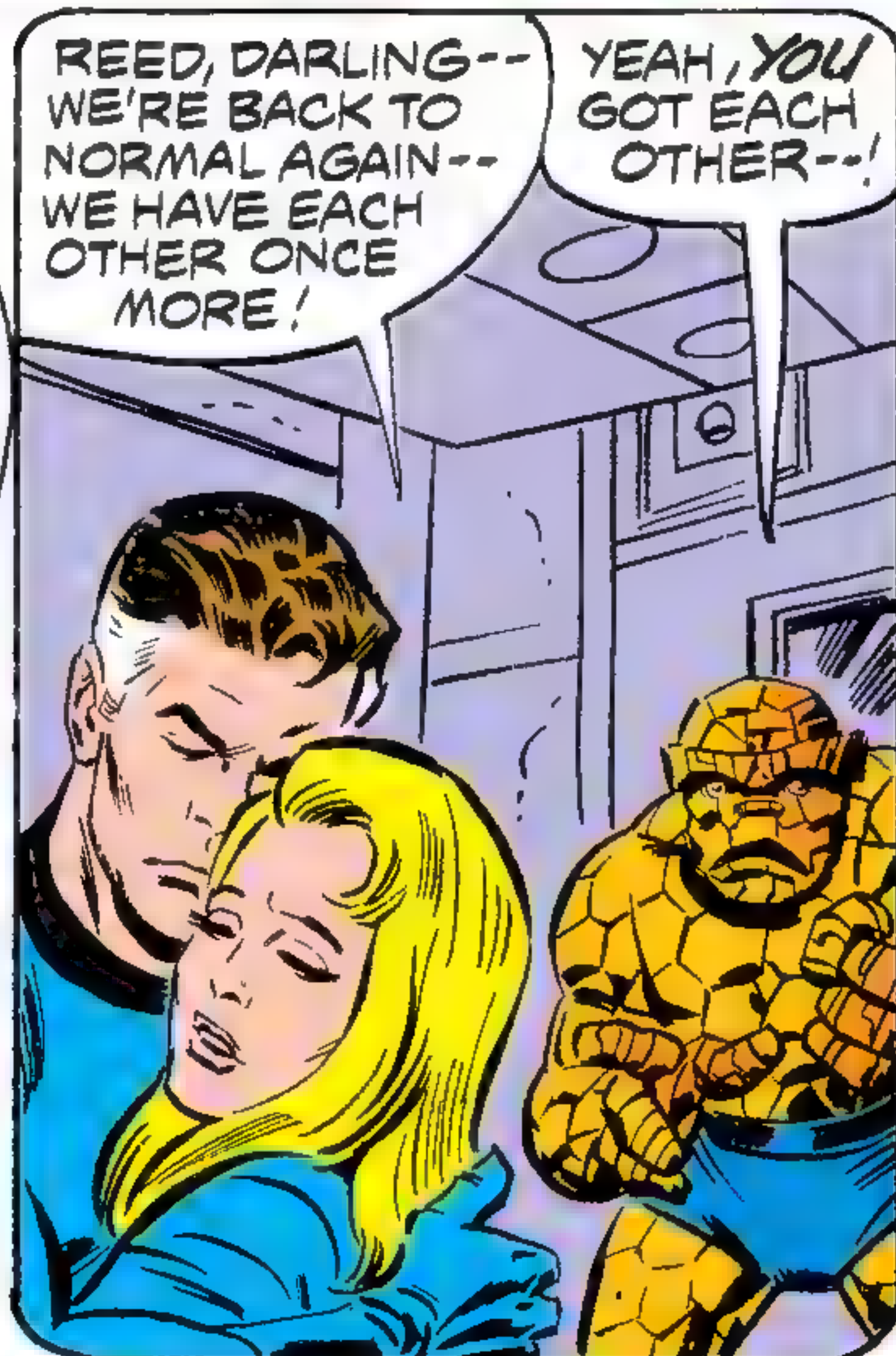
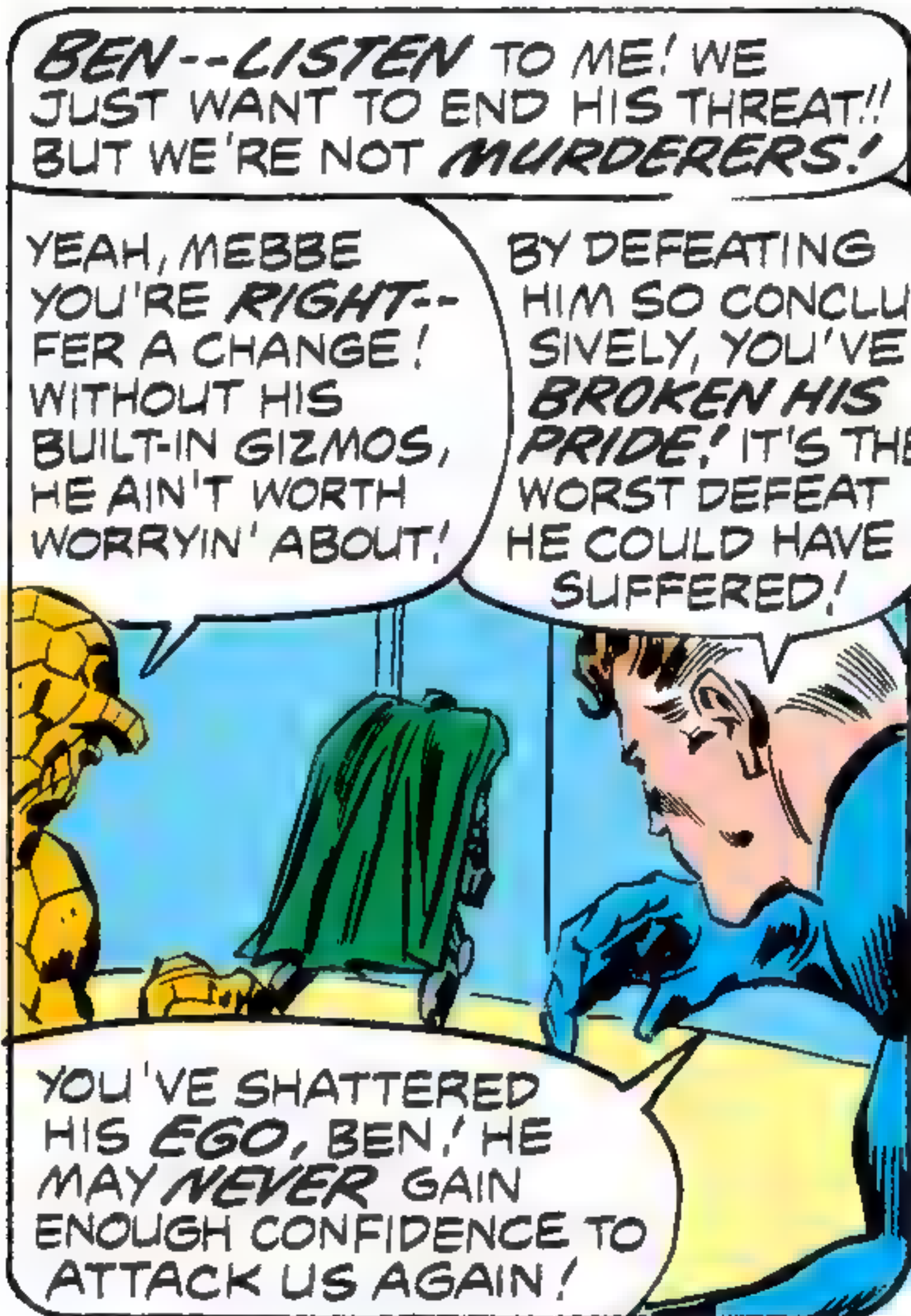
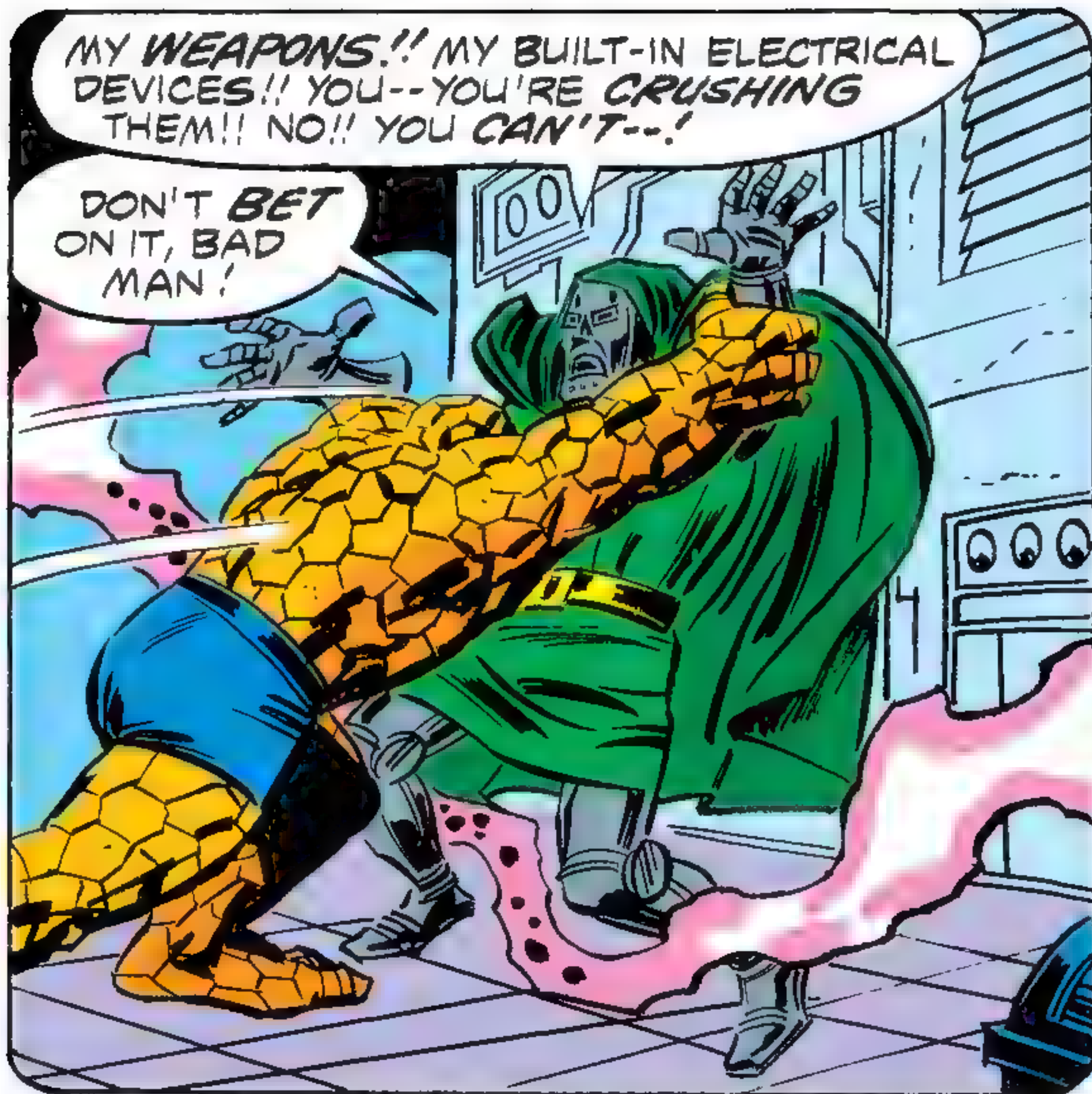
NO!! IT'S IM-
POSSIBLE!
YOU CAN'T
KEEP COMING--
NOT AGAINST
THE FORCE OF
MY NERVE -
SHATTERING ENER-
GY BLASTS!

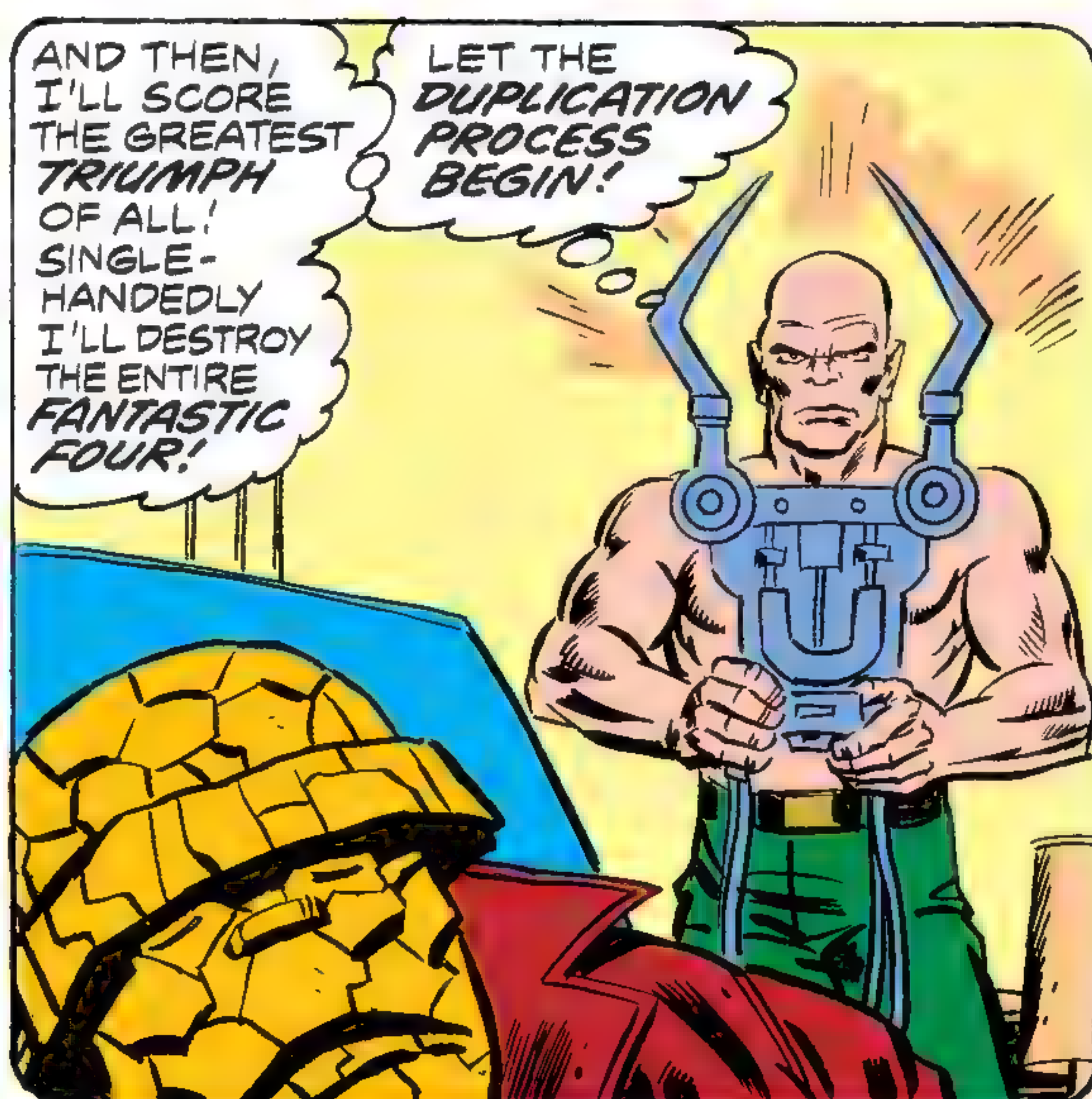
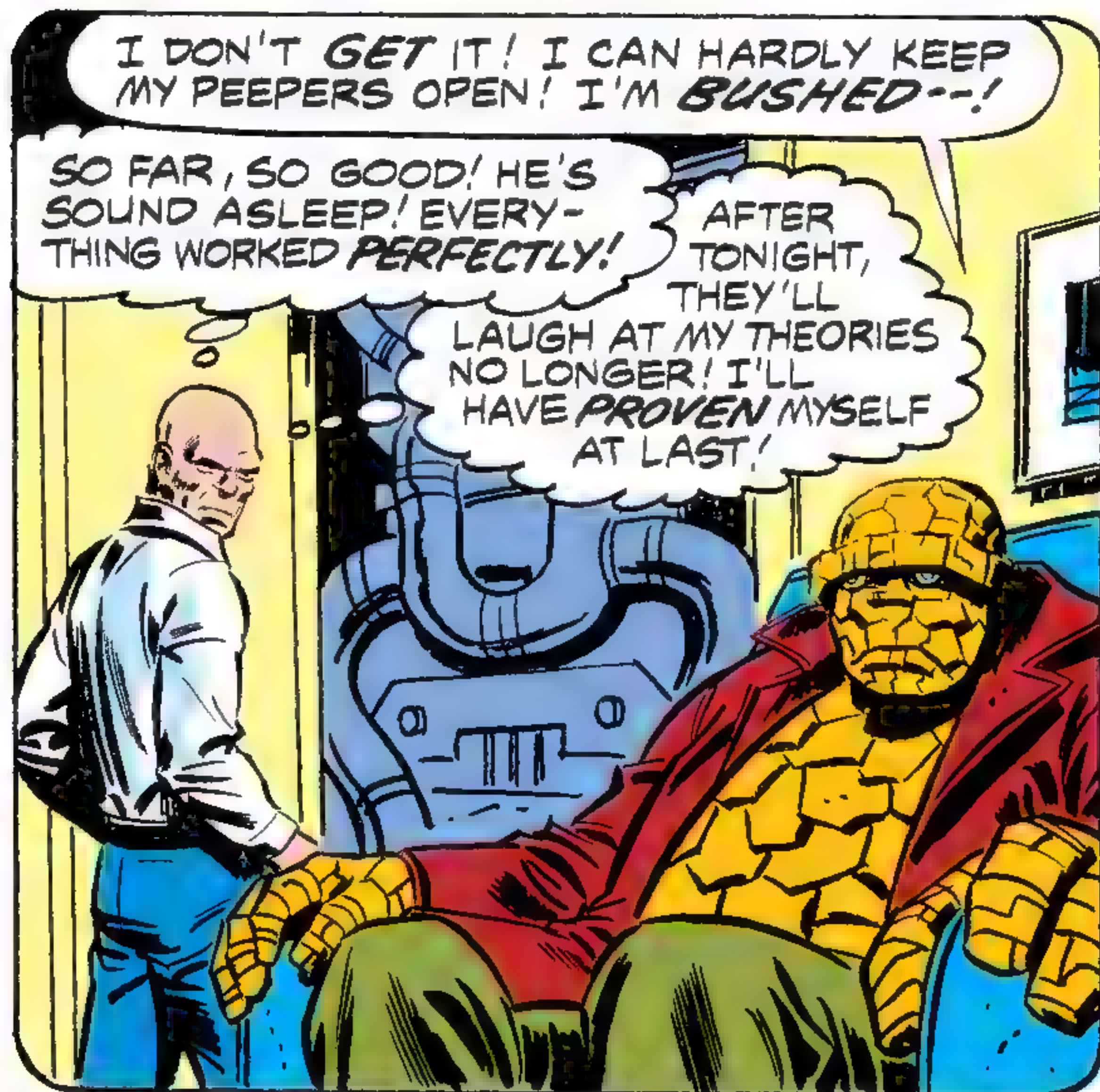
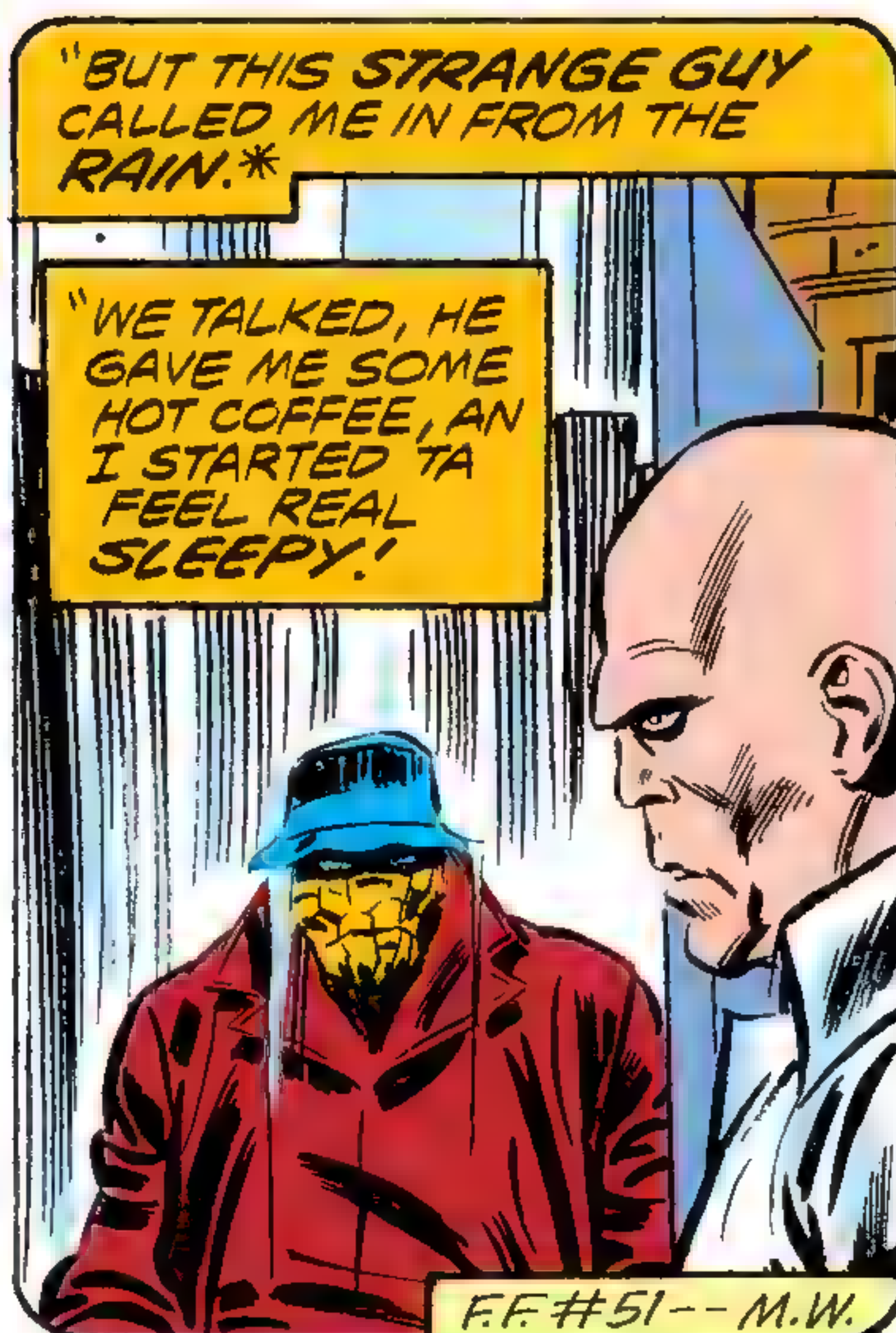
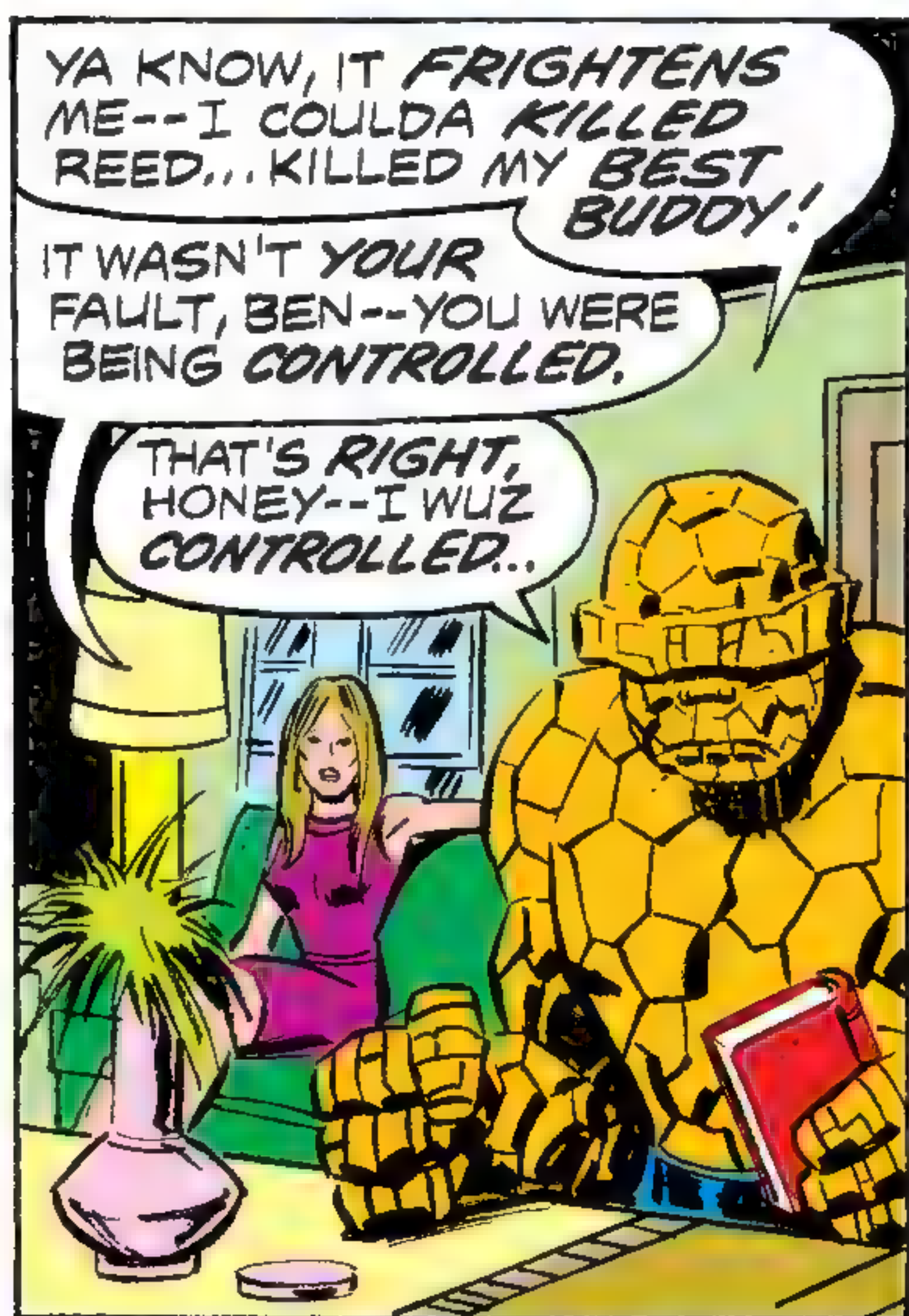
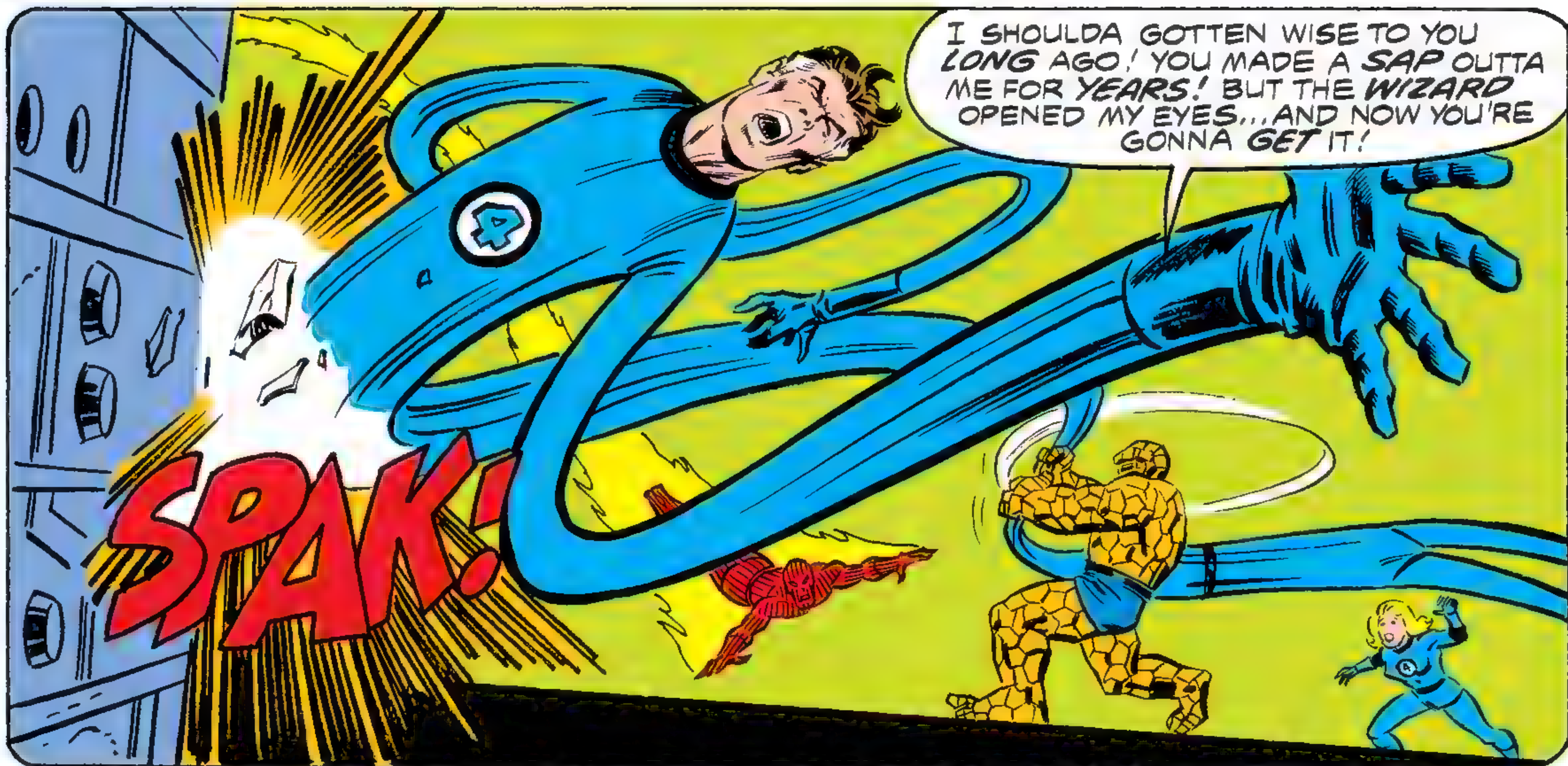


MISTER, MAYBE
I'M JUST TOO
DUMB TO
COLLAPSE--
TOO **UGLY** TO
DIE!! I'LL LET
YOU FIGGER
OUT THE
REASONS...

AS FER **ME**-- I FINALLY
GOT MY **PAWS** ON YA--
AN' **NOTHIN'S** GONNA
SAVE YA **NOW!**



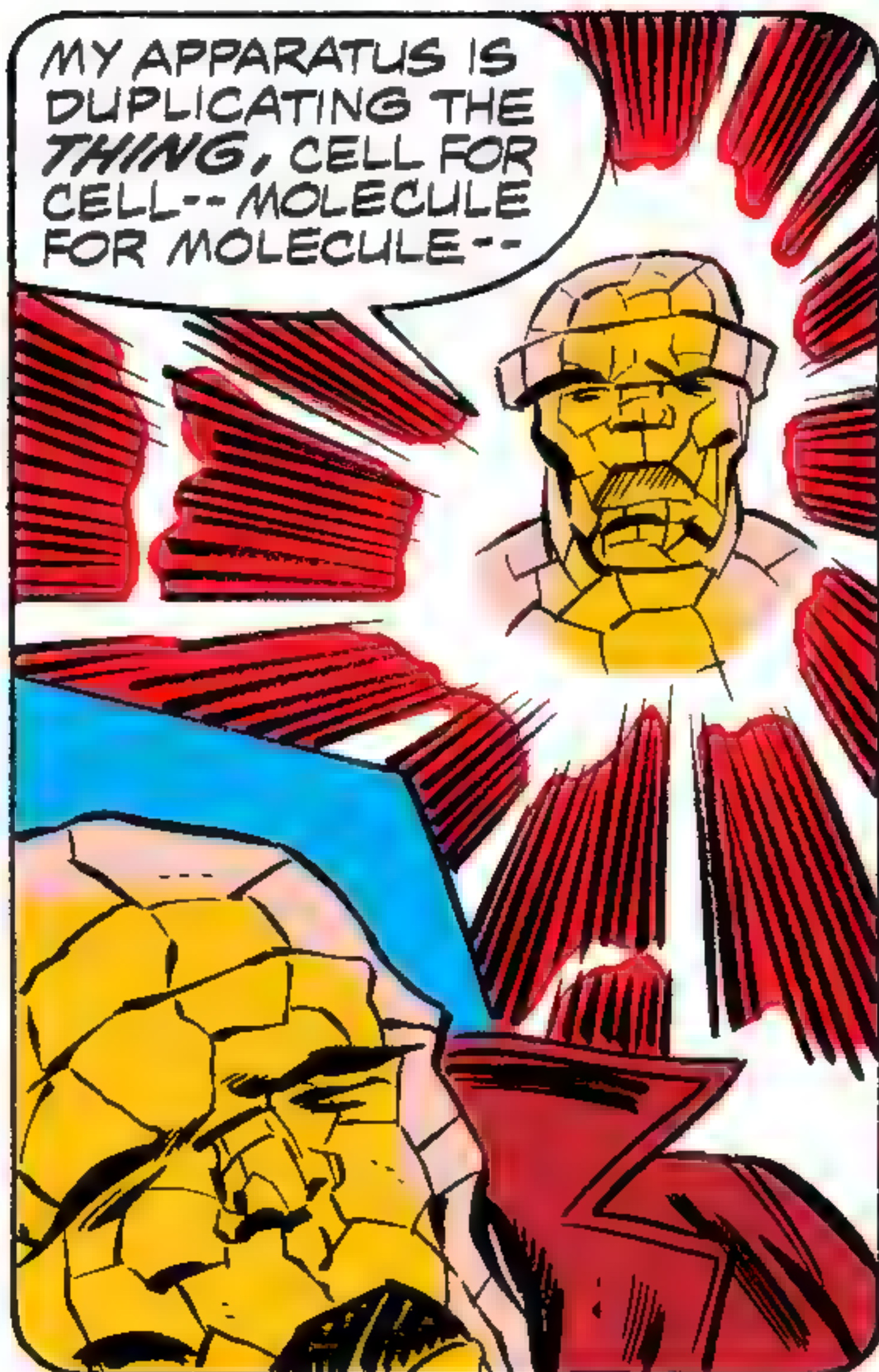




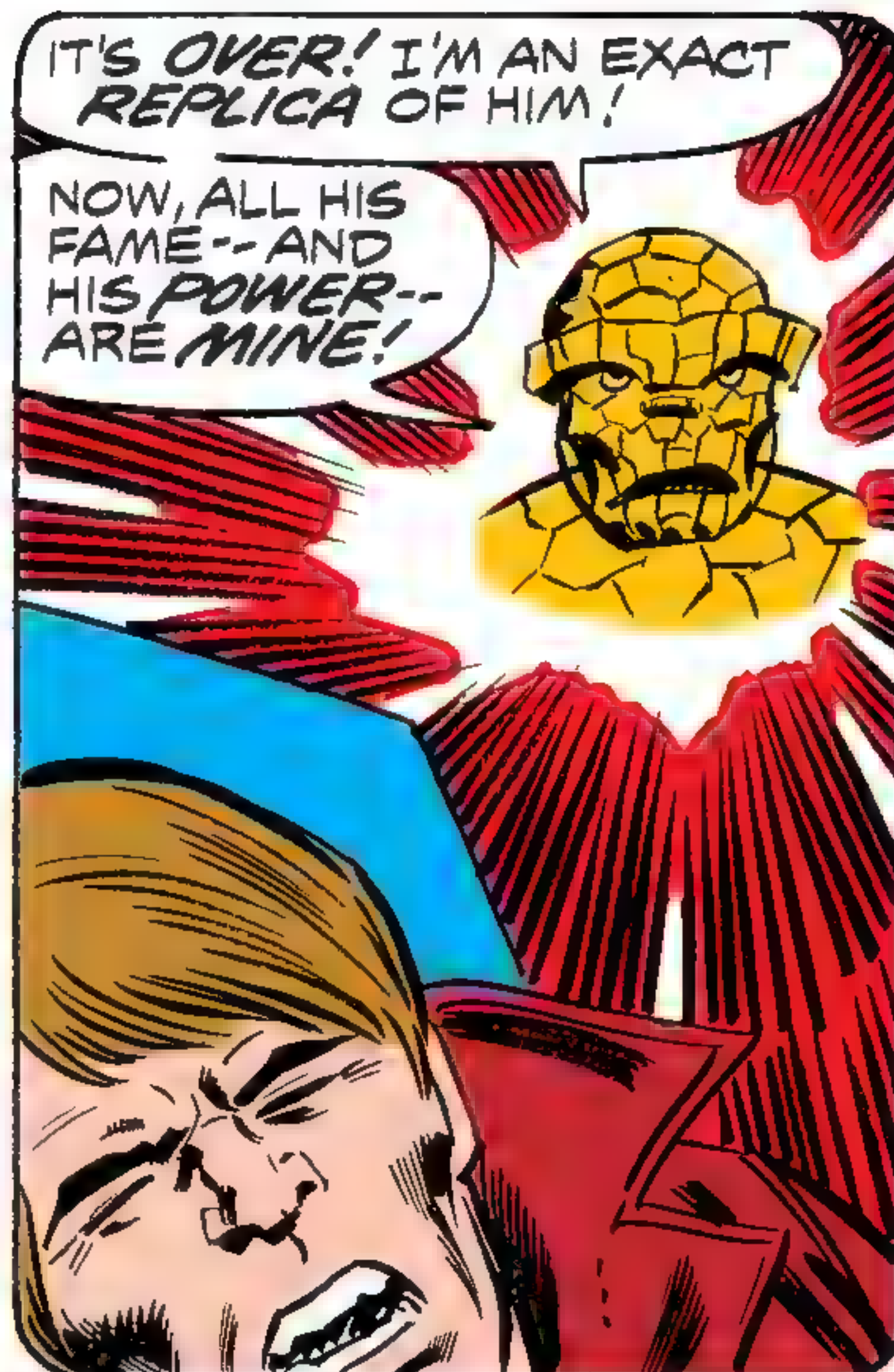


I'VE SPENT A *LIFETIME* CREATING MY *DUPLICATION APPARATUS!*

IT'S *WORKING--* AS I *KNEW* IT WOULD! I CAN *SENSE* IT-- I CAN *FEEL* IT--!

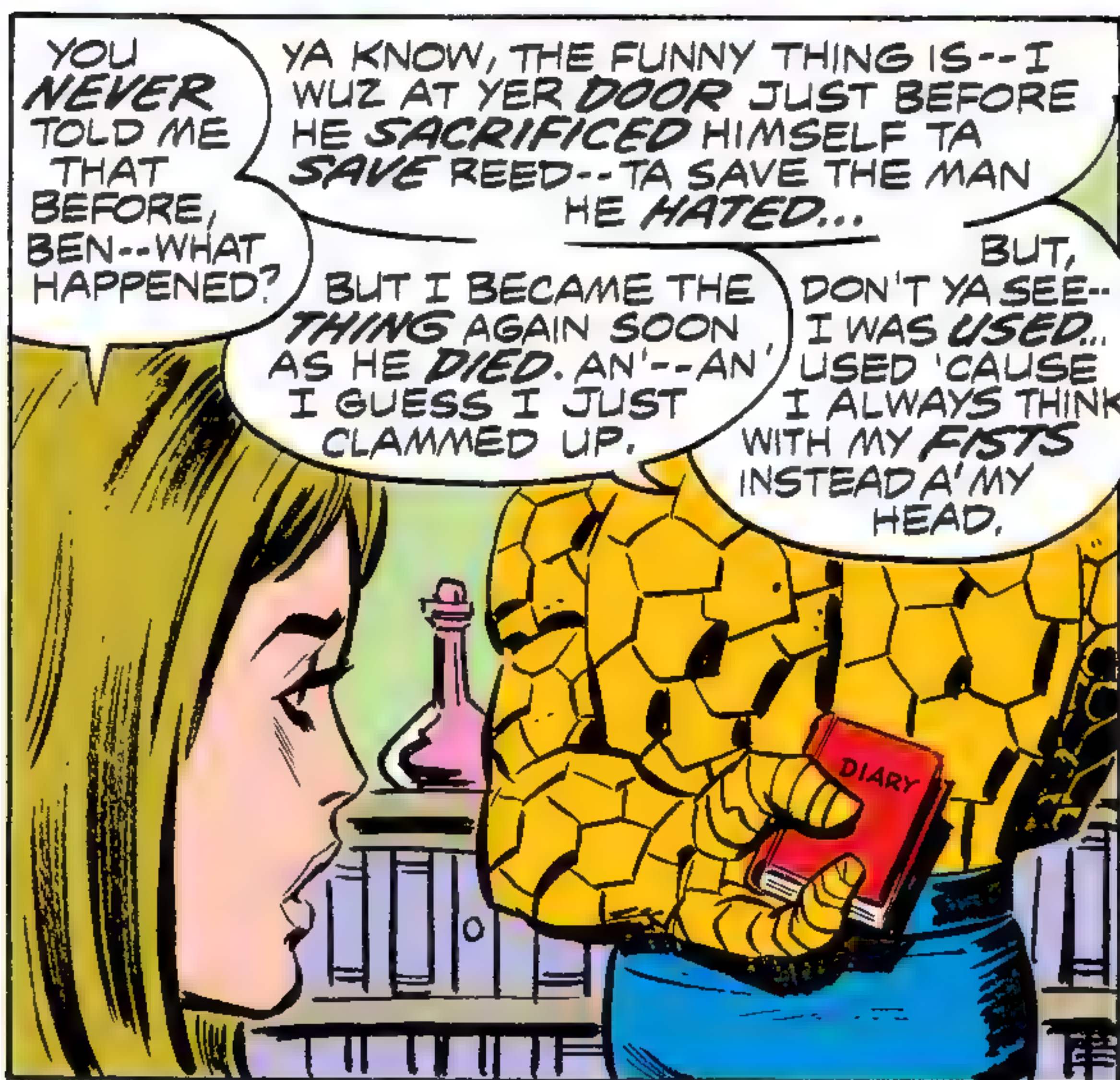


MY APPARATUS IS DUPLICATING THE *THING*, CELL FOR CELL-- MOLECULE FOR MOLECULE--



IT'S *OVER!* I'M AN EXACT *REPLICA* OF HIM!

NOW, ALL HIS *FAME--* AND HIS *POWER--* ARE *MINE!*

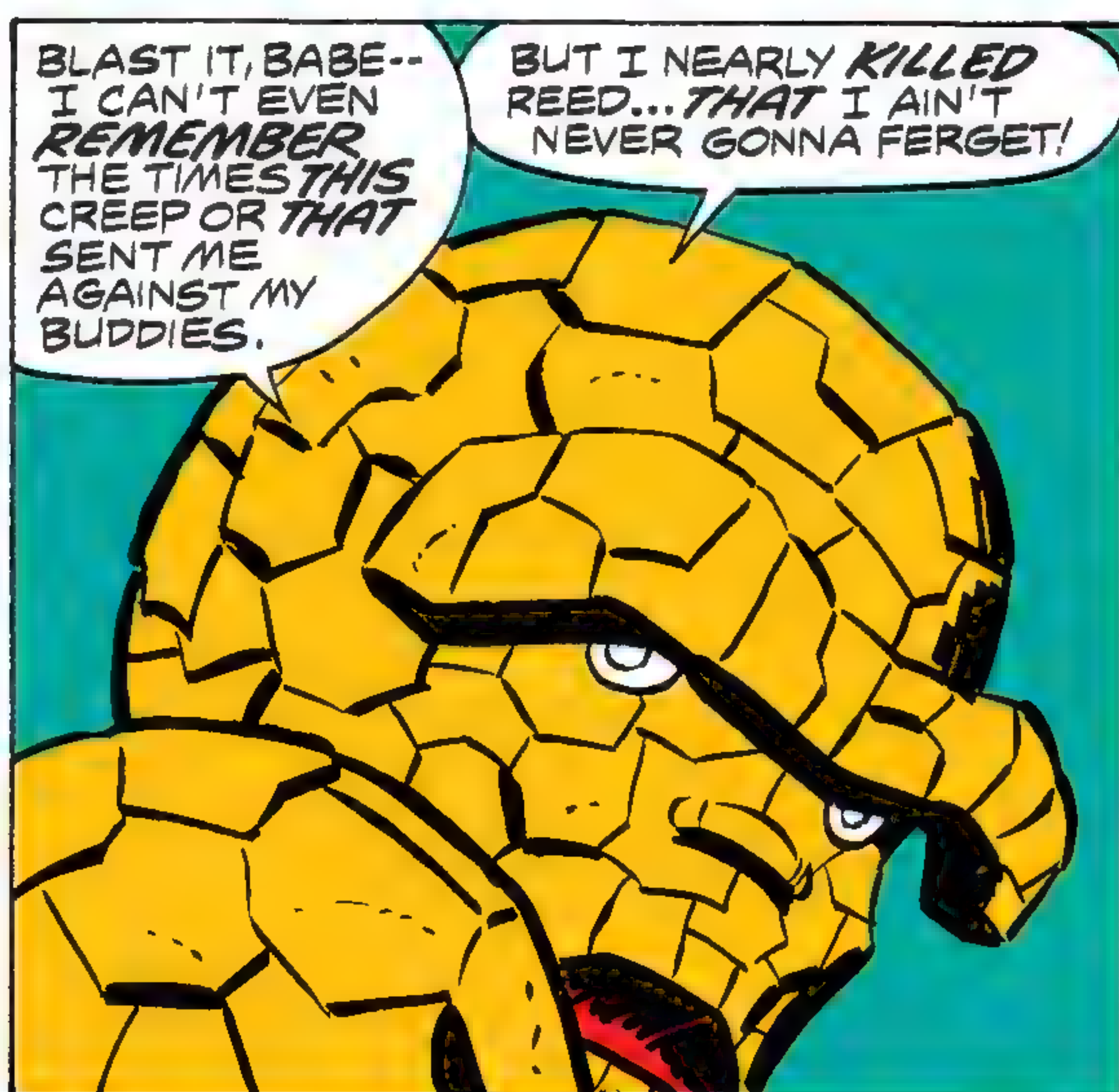


YOU *NEVER* TOLD ME THAT BEFORE, BEN-- WHAT HAPPENED?

YA KNOW, THE FUNNY THING IS-- I WUZ AT YER *DOOR* JUST BEFORE HE *SACRIFICED* HIMSELF TA *SAVE* REED-- TA *SAVE* THE MAN HE *HATED...*

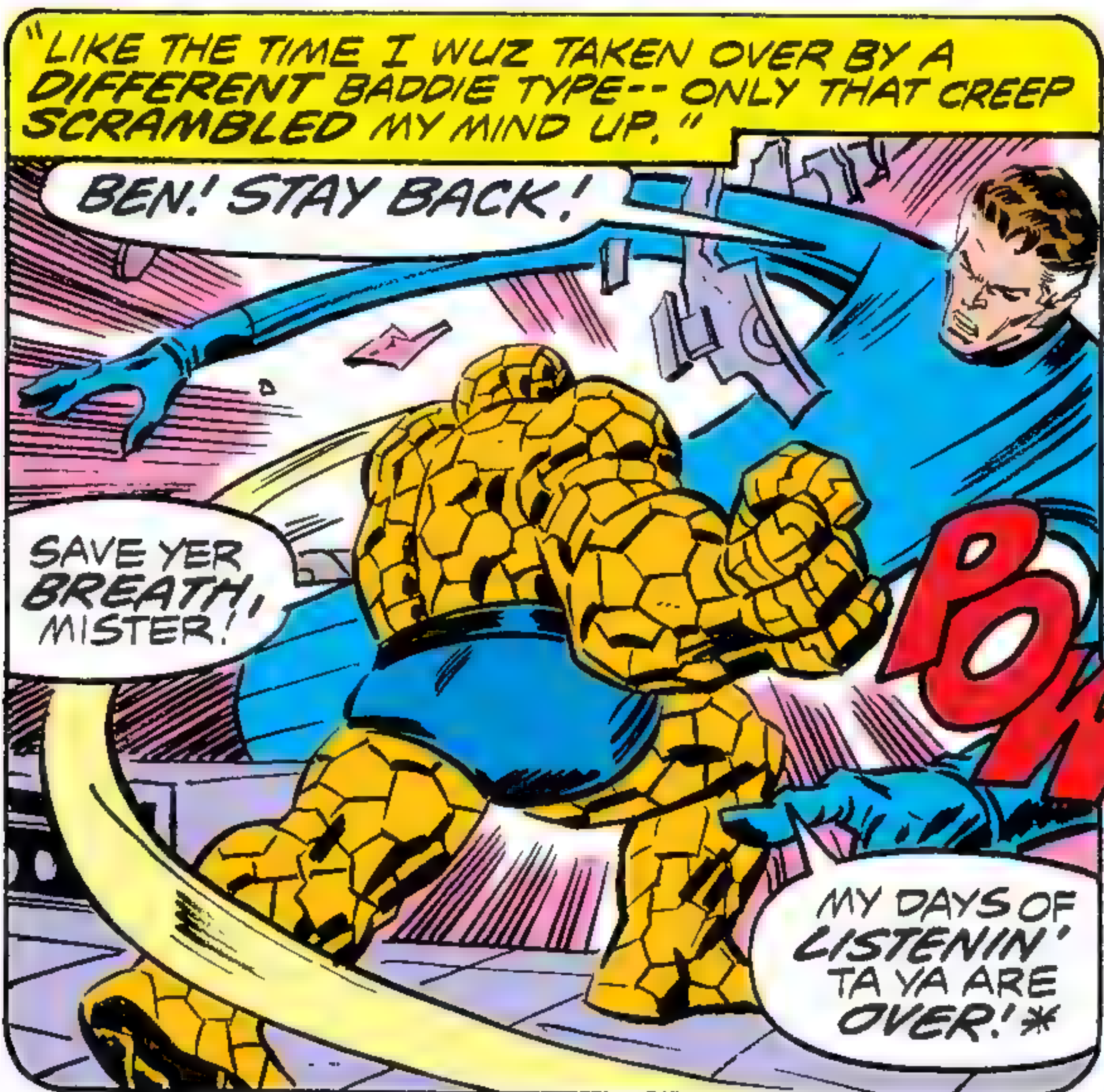
BUT I BECAME THE *THING* AGAIN SOON AS HE *DIED*. AN'-- AN' I GUESS I JUST CLAMMED UP.

BUT, DON'T YA SEE-- I WAS *USED...* USED 'CAUSE I ALWAYS THINK WITH MY *FISTS* INSTEAD A' MY HEAD.



BLAST IT, BABE-- I CAN'T EVEN *REMEMBER* THE TIMES *THIS* CREEP OR *THAT* SENT ME AGAINST MY BUDDIES.

BUT I NEARLY *KILLED* REED... *THAT* I AIN'T NEVER GONNA FERGET!

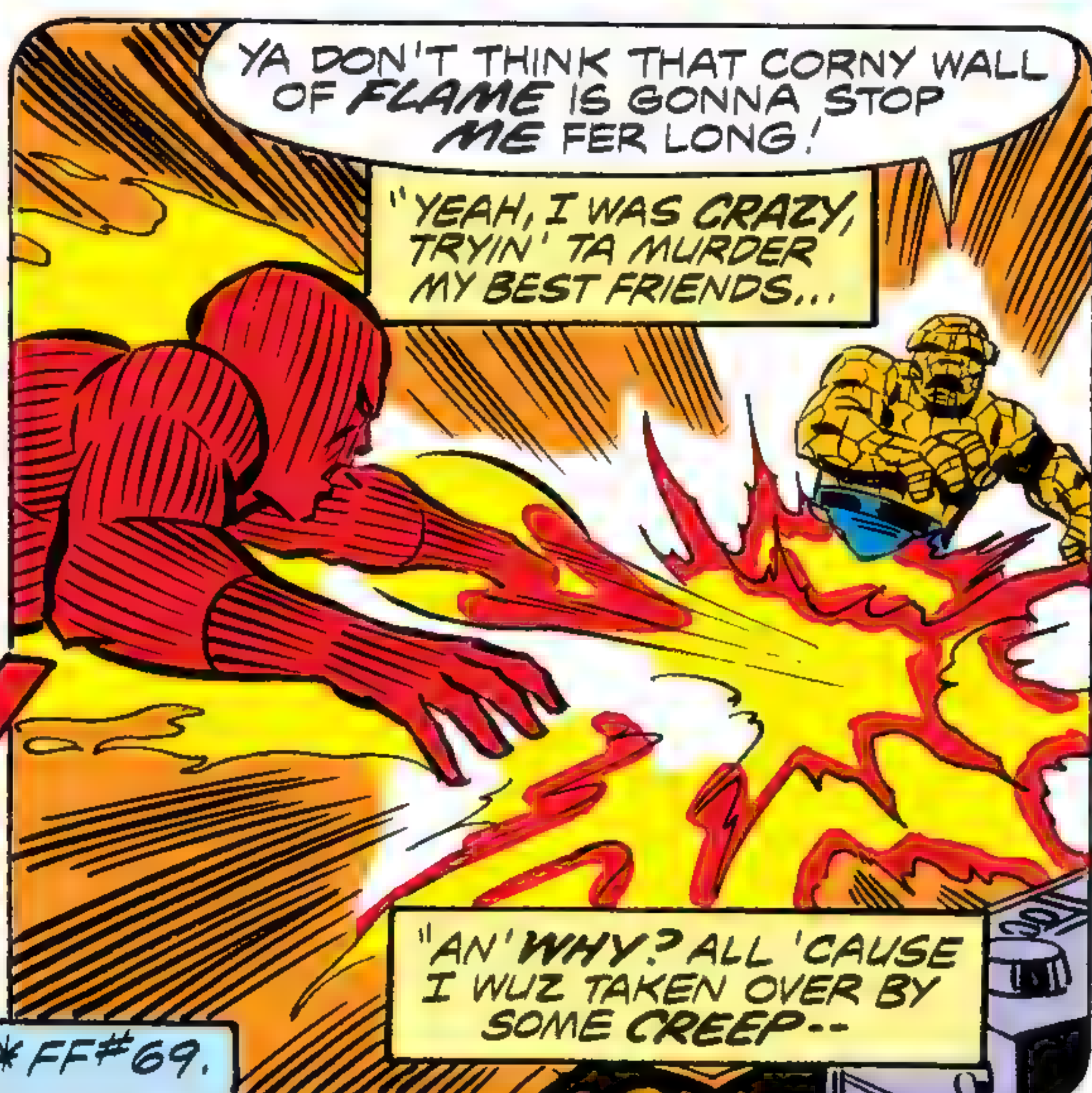


"LIKE THE TIME I WUZ TAKEN OVER BY A *DIFFERENT* BADDIE TYPE-- ONLY THAT CREEP *SCRAMBLED* MY MIND UP."

BEN! STAY BACK!

SAVE YER *BREATH*, MISTER!

MY DAYS OF *LISTENIN'* TA YA ARE *OVER!* *



YA DON'T THINK THAT CORNY WALL OF *FLAME* IS GONNA STOP ME FER LONG!

"YEAH, I WAS *CRAZY*, TRYIN' TA *MURDER* MY BEST FRIENDS..."

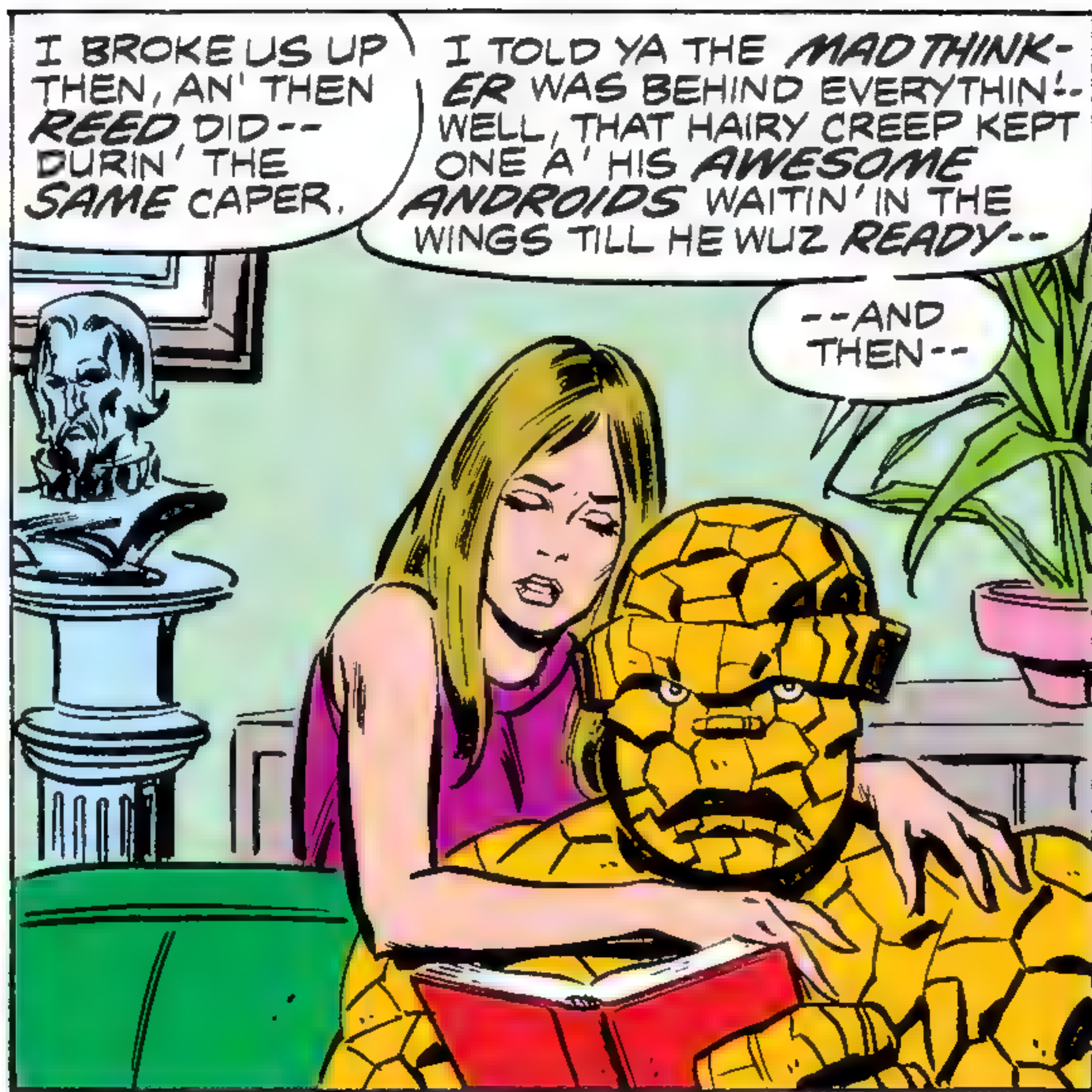
"AN' *WHY?* ALL 'CAUSE I WUZ TAKEN OVER BY SOME *CREEP--*

*FF#69.



"--THIS TIME--
THE MAD THINKER!"

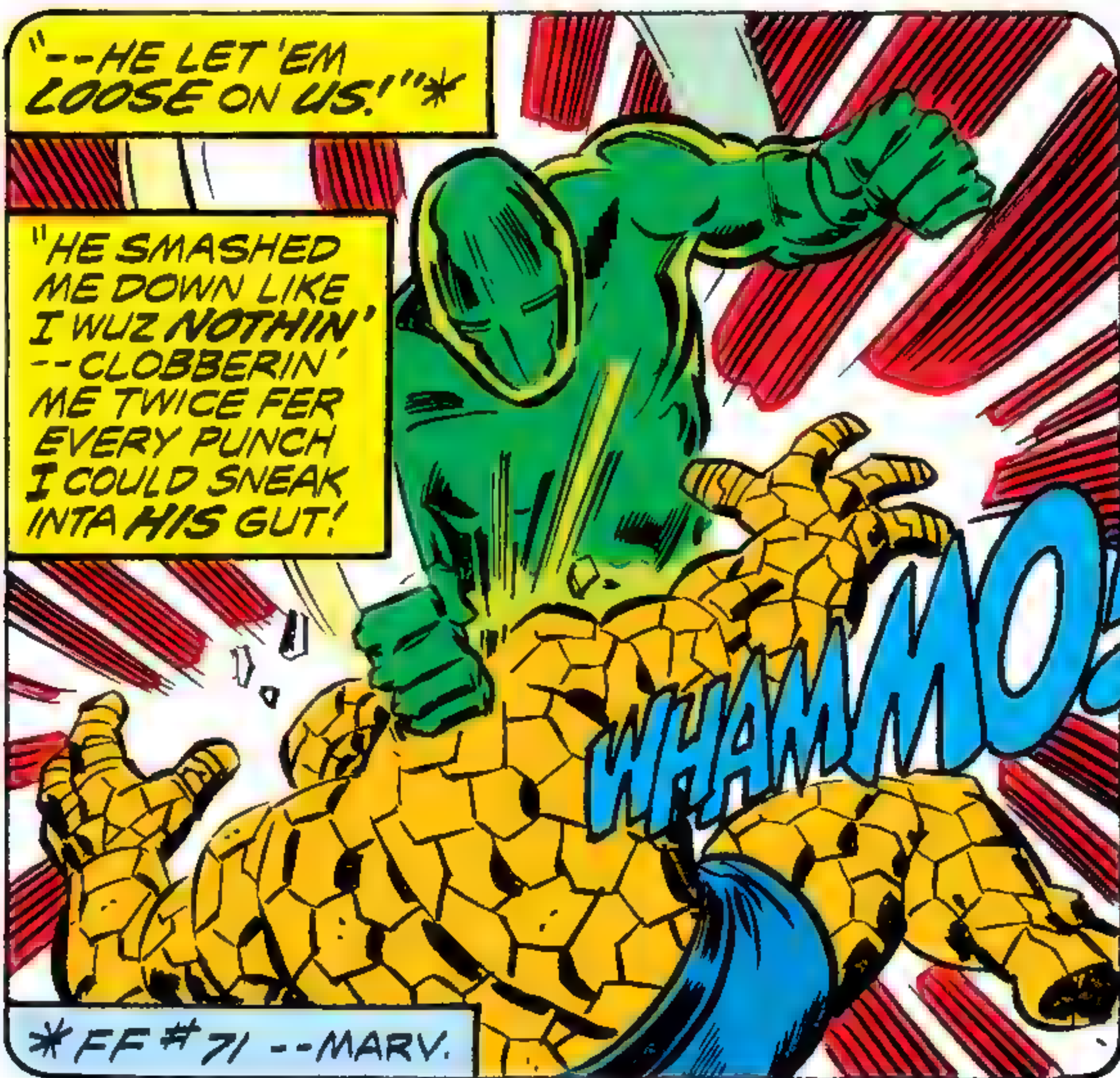
"EVENTUALLY, I GOT BETTER,
BUT THAT AIN'T THE POINT.
THE POINT IS-- I FOUGHT
MY BUDDIES, MY PARTNERS--"



I BROKE US UP
THEN, AN' THEN
REED DID--
DURIN' THE
SAME CAPER.

I TOLD YA THE **MAD THINK-
ER** WAS BEHIND EVERYTHIN'--
WELL, THAT HAIRY CREEP KEPT
ONE A' HIS **AWESOME
ANDROIDS** WAITIN' IN THE
WINGS TILL HE WUZ **READY--**

--AND
THEN--

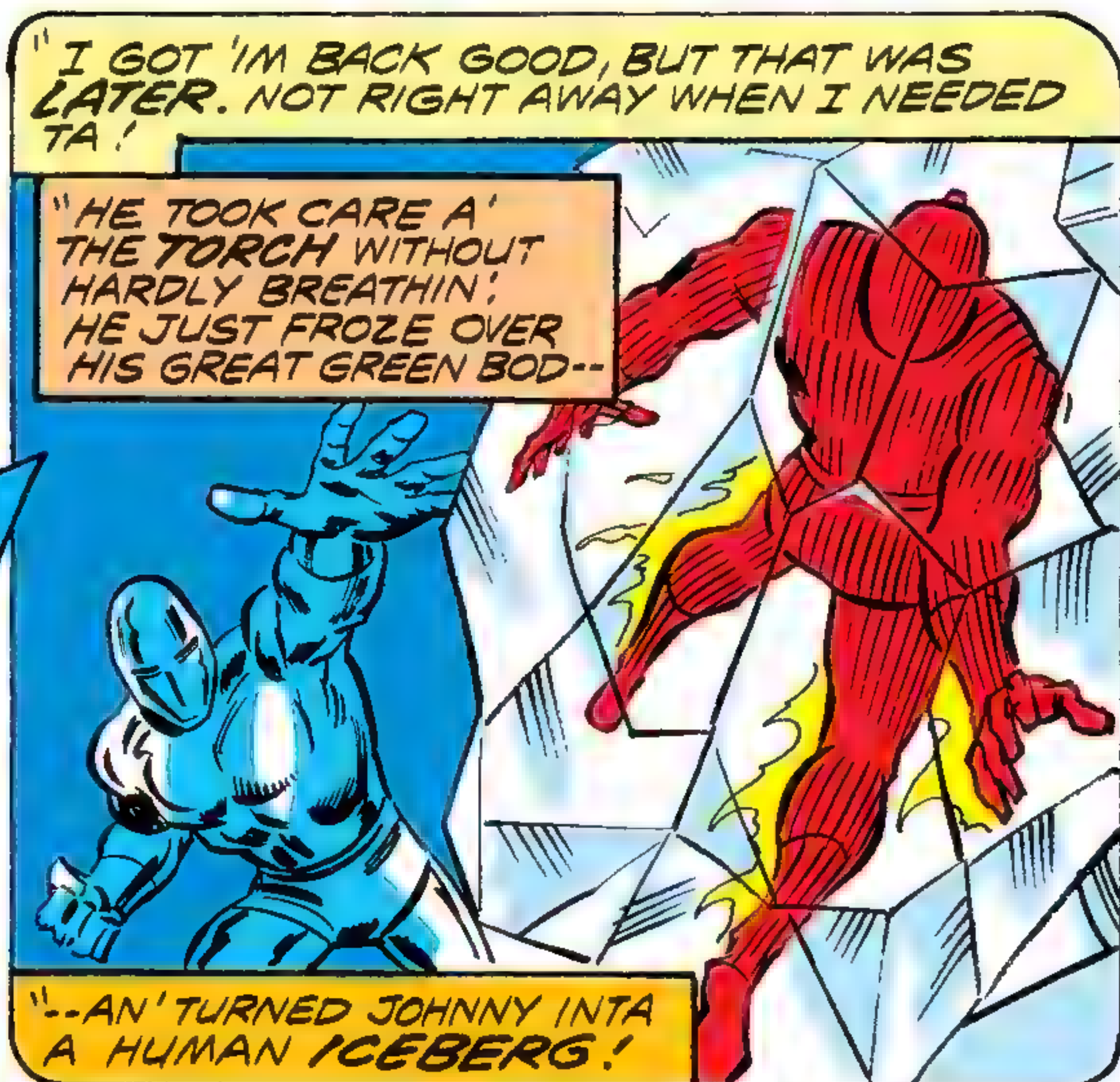


"--HE LET 'EM
LOOSE ON US!"*

"HE SMASHED
ME DOWN LIKE
I WUZ **NOTHIN'**
--CLOBBERIN'
ME TWICE FER
EVERY PUNCH
I COULD SNEAK
INTA **HIS** GUT!"

WHAMMO!

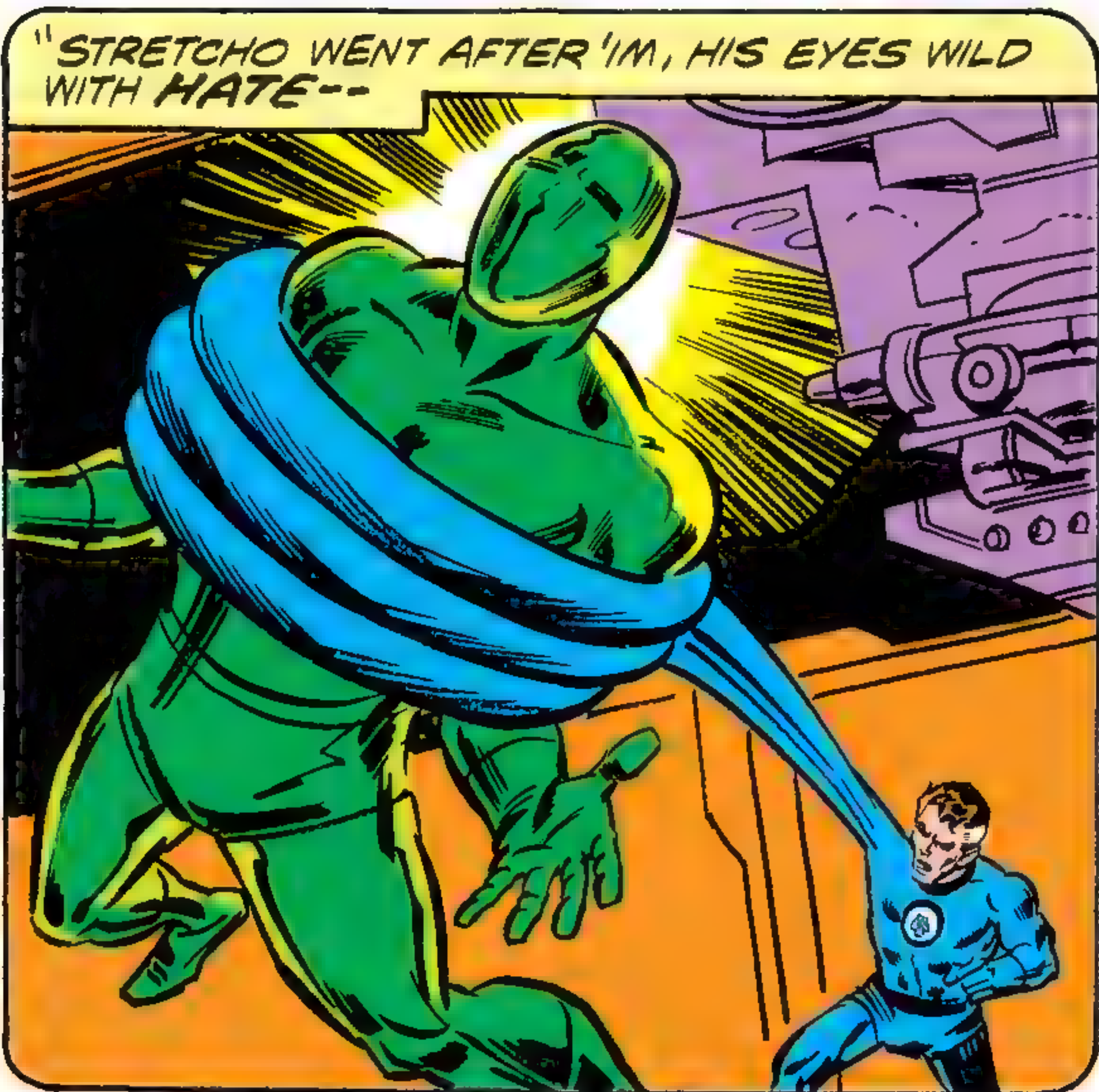
*FF #71 --MARV.



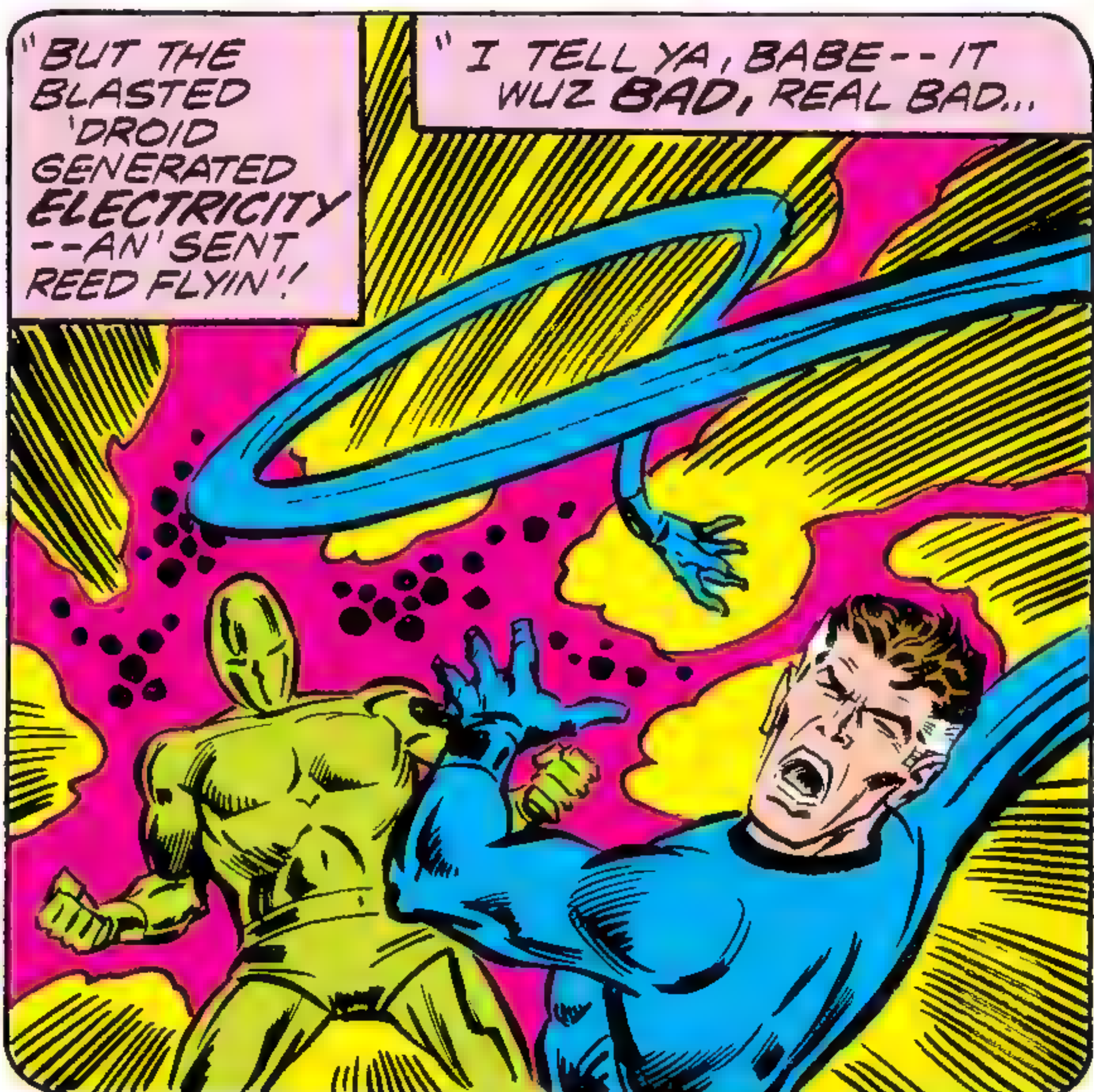
"I GOT 'IM BACK GOOD, BUT THAT WAS
LATER. NOT RIGHT AWAY WHEN I NEEDED
TA!"

"HE TOOK CARE A'
THE **TORCH** WITHOUT
HARDLY BREATHIN'.
HE JUST FROZE OVER
HIS GREAT GREEN BOD--"

"--AN' TURNED JOHNNY INTA
A HUMAN **ICEBERG!**"



"STRETCHO WENT AFTER 'IM, HIS EYES WILD
WITH **HATE--**"



"BUT THE
BLASTED
'DROID
GENERATED
ELECTRICITY
--AN' SENT
REED FLYIN'!"

"I TELL YA, BABE-- IT
WUZ **BAD**, REAL BAD..."

--TILL REED FINALLY TRICKED THE BUM INTA FALLIN' THROUGH THE **NEGATIVE ZONE**, WE WUZ DONE WITH 'IM THEN!



"JUST AS WE WUZ DONE BEIN' THE F.F.,-- 'CAUSE THAT'S WHEN REED LAYED ONE ON US."

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO TRAP HIM IN THE **NEGATIVE ZONE**! BUT--IF THERE WERE NO NEGATIVE ZONE--

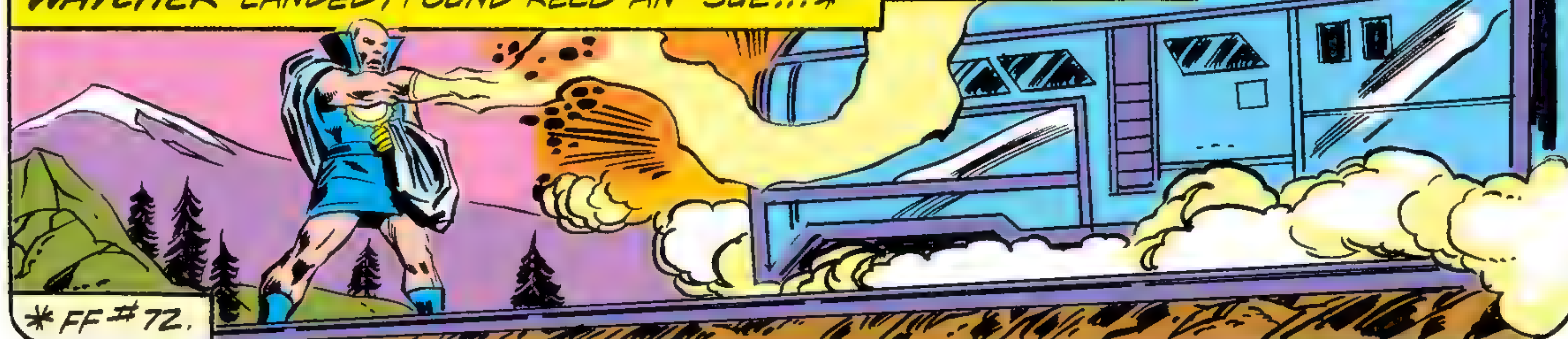
--THAT CREATURE WAS PRACTICALLY **UNBEATABLE**! IT COULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF US! I CAN'T JEOPARDIZE MY WIFE'S LIFE ANY LONGER! ESPECIALLY NOW... WHEN SHE'S GOING TO HAVE A BABY!

SUE AND I ARE **CUTTING OUT**!

THAT MEANS... THE END OF THE F.F.!!



"THEY LEFT US HIGH AN' DRY, BUT THEN, THE **SILVER SURFER** CAME BACK TA EARTH, SET ON WRECKIN' THIS WORLD. THAT'S WHEN THE **WATCHER** LANDED, FOUND REED AN' SUE... *



* FF #72.

THE **SILVER SURFER** --UNMINDFUL OF THE DREAD **CONSEQUENCES**-- NOW RUNS AMOK AMONGST MANKIND!

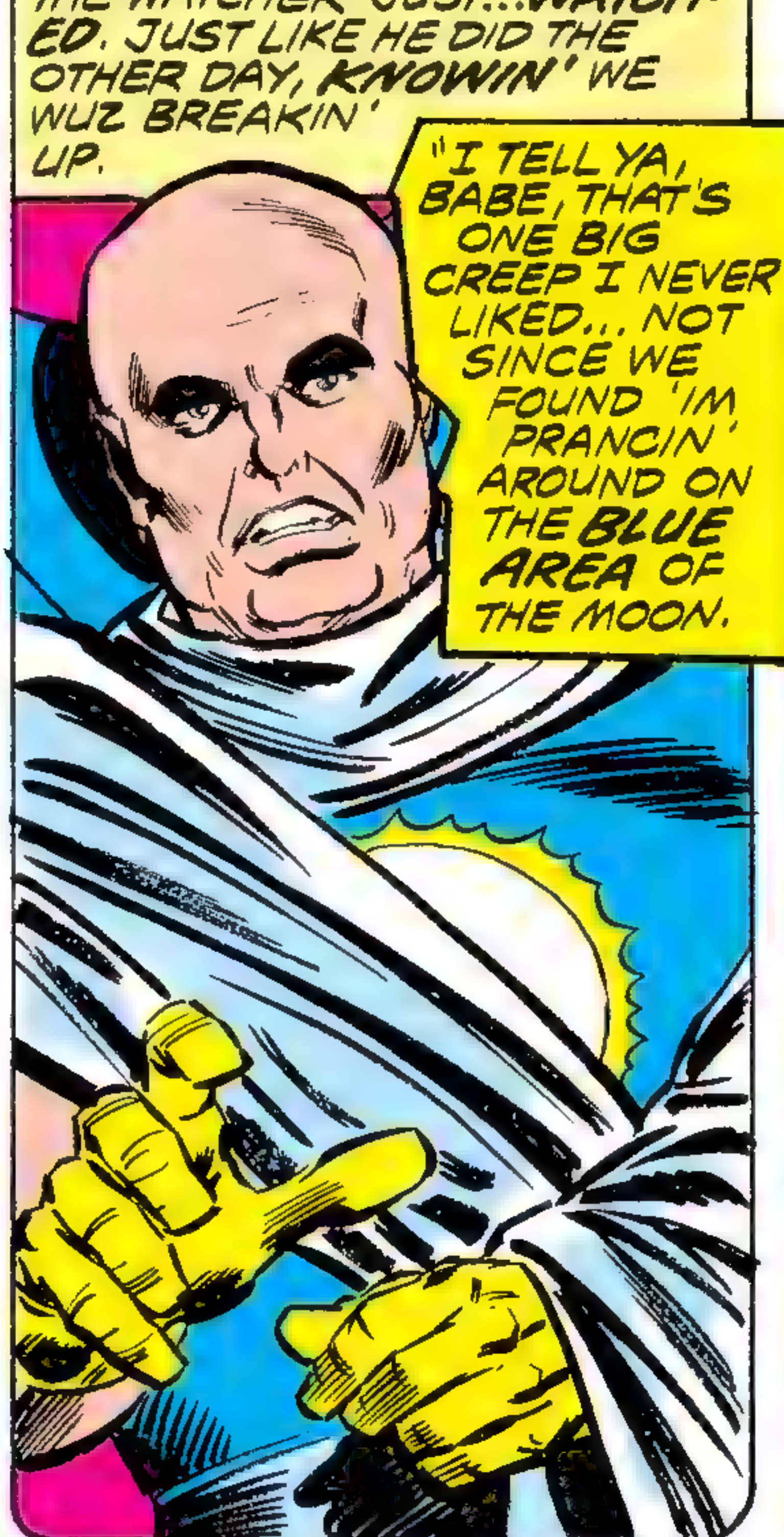
THOUGH I AM **FORBIDDEN** TO ENTER THE FRAY--

SAY NO MORE!! I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE!

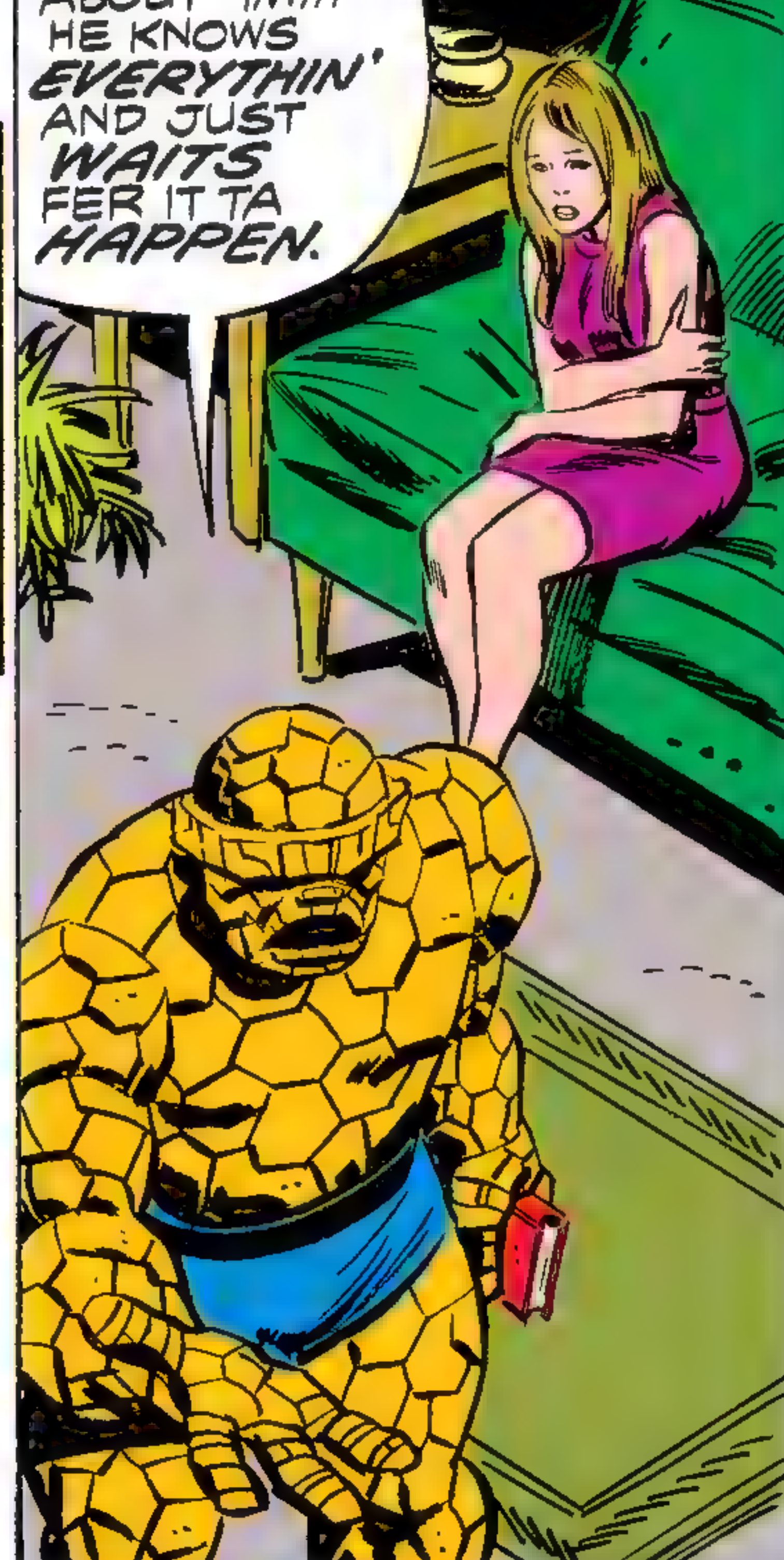


"REED COPPED OUT; HE HADDA COME SLITHERIN' BACK TA HELP US... WHILE THE **WATCHER** JUST... **WATCHED**. JUST LIKE HE DID THE OTHER DAY, **KNOWIN'** WE WUZ BREAKIN' LIP.

"I TELL YA, BABE, THAT'S ONE BIG CREEP I NEVER LIKED... NOT SINCE WE FOUND 'IM PRANCIN' AROUND ON THE **BLUE AREA** OF THE MOON.



THERE'S SOMETHIN' **SPOOKY** ABOUT 'IM... HE KNOWS **EVERYTHIN'** AND JUST **WAITS** FER IT TA HAPPEN.



ONE WORD OUTTA 'IM WOULD'VE SOLVED A DOZEN PROBLEMS, BUT HE JUST **GLOATS** OVER US... WATCHIN' US MAKE COSMIC-POWERED **FOOLS** OUTTA OURSELVES.

AN' WE'RE ALL TOO HAPPY TA **OBLIGE**. I REMEMBER THE TIME THE **TORCH** BROKE US APART...

BROKE US APART FOR THE GAL HE **LOVED**.*

X.F.F. #129--M.W.

I'M GOING TO **JOIN CRYSTAL** IN THE LAND OF THE **INHUMANS**-- **PERMANENTLY**!

NO! I WON'T LET YOU DO IT, SON

OWWW..!

I'M THE **HUMAN TORCH**, RE-MEMBER? IF YOU **DON'T**-- MAYBE THIS'LL RE-MIND YOU!

YOU WON'T **LET**--? JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE **TALKING** TO, PAL?

BEN! THE **TORCH** IS **RUNNING WILD**!

WE'VE GOT TO **CATCH** HIM, BEFORE HE DOES SOMETHING **FOOLISH**!

Y'MEAN LIKE GO **MARRY** THE CHICK HE **LOVES**?

"I'M **COMIN'**; **BIG WORDS**-- BUT I DON'T **HAFTA** LIKE IT!"

...USED TO **MONKEY** AROUND WITH **HOT RODS**, BACK WHEN I WAS A **PUNK KID**.

GOOD THING **REED** TAUGHT ME HOW TO **HANDLE** THIS **BABY**, SO I CAN-- **BLAST OFF**!

WE'RE **TOO LATE**. HE'S **LIFTIN'** OFF!

HOLD ON TO IT, **BEN**! ONLY YOU CAN DO IT!

NO SWEAT, **LEADER MAN**. **NASA** **MISSILE** OR **NO NASA** **MISSILE**, OL' **BASHFUL BENJY** CAN--

--MY **HANDS**!

THEY'RE **FADING AWAY**!!

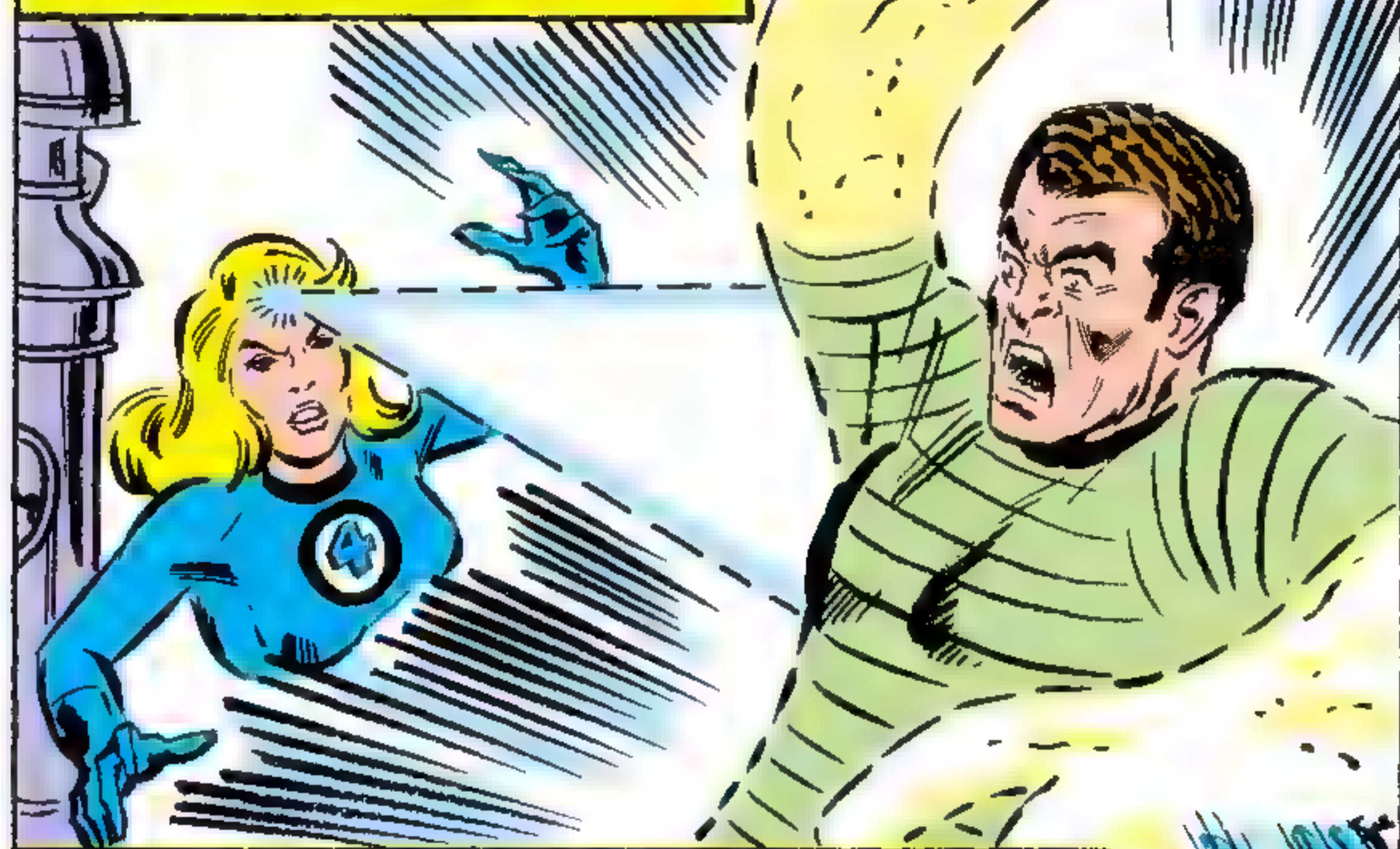
SUE! THIS IS YOUR **DOING**--IT **HAS** TO BE! **WHY**, **SUE**--**WHY**??

HE'S MY **BROTHER**, **REED**-- BUT HE'S ALSO A **MAN**. A **MAN** GOING TO **CLAIM** THE **WOMAN** HE **LOVES**!

BUT--HAVEN'T I **EXPLAINED** THE **DANGERS** TO YOU **OFTEN** **ENOUGH**?

REED, I **LOVE** YOU **SO MUCH**... BUT IN **SOME** **WAYS** ...IT'S **YOU**, NOT **ALICIA**, WHO ARE **TRULY** **BLIND**!

"THAT WUZ THE BEGINNIN' OF ANOTHER BREAK-UP, ONLY WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEN. ANYWAY, WE WUZ AGAIN ATTACKED BY THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR..."



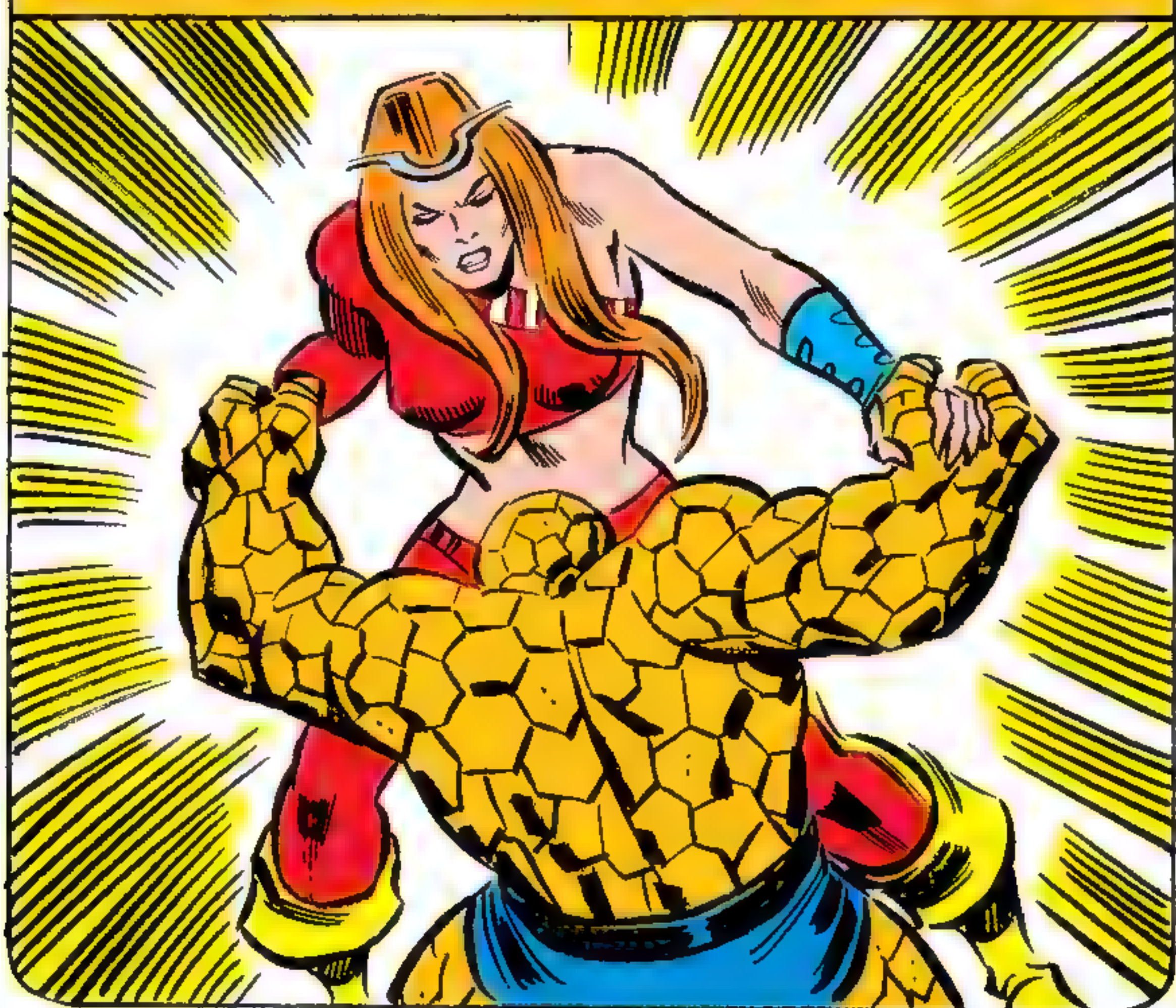
"SUE DID HER BIT IN STOPPIN' THE SANDMAN, CONFUSIN' HIS PEA-SIZE BRAIN BY TURNIN' IM INVIS-
IBLE.*

*F.F.
#130
--M.W.

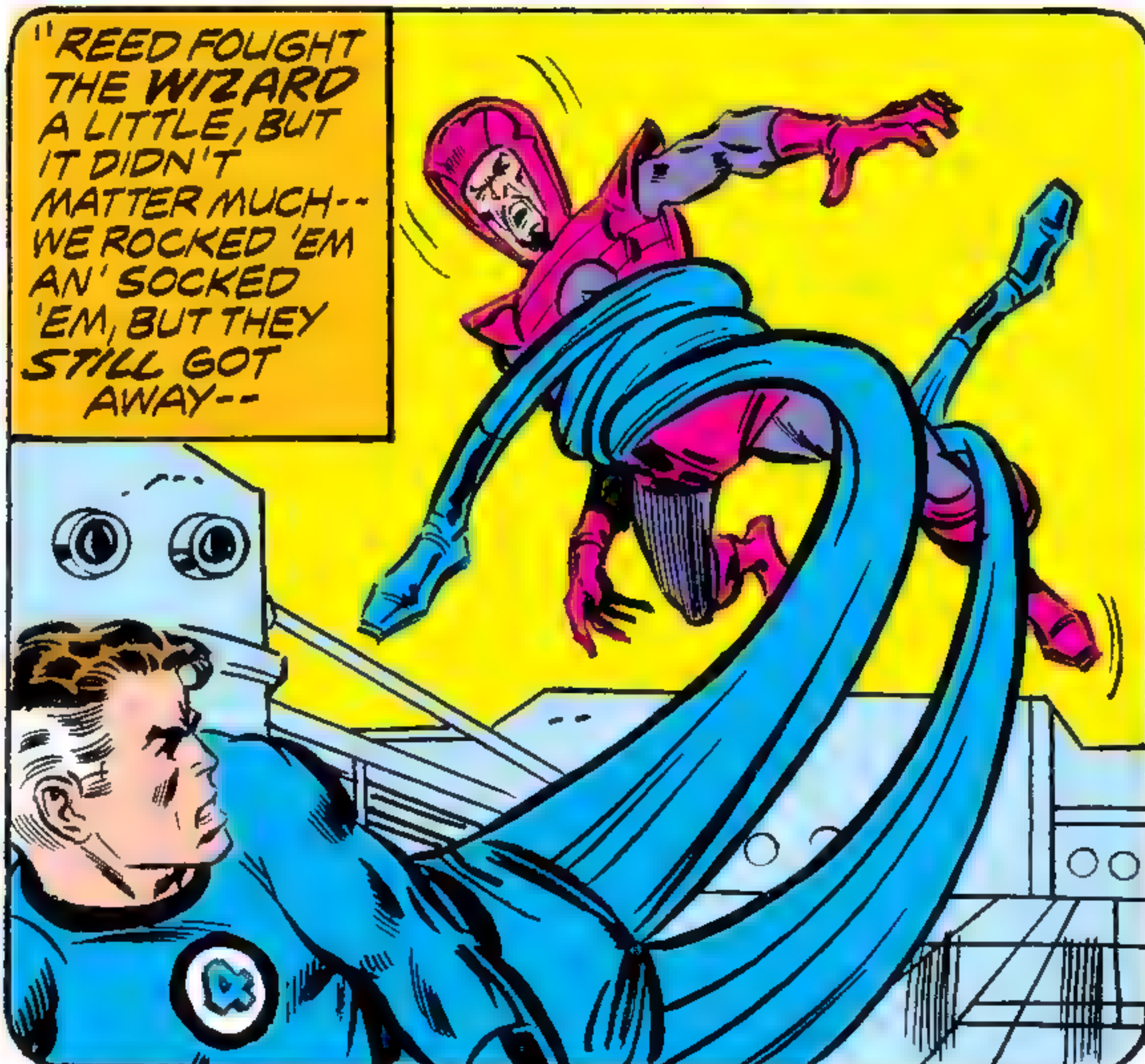
"MEDUSA TOOK CARE A' THE TRAPSTER--



"WHILE ME AN' THUNDRA BELTED IT OUT!



"REED FOUGHT THE WIZARD A LITTLE, BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER MUCH-- WE ROCKED 'EM AN' SOCKED 'EM, BUT THEY STILL GOT AWAY--

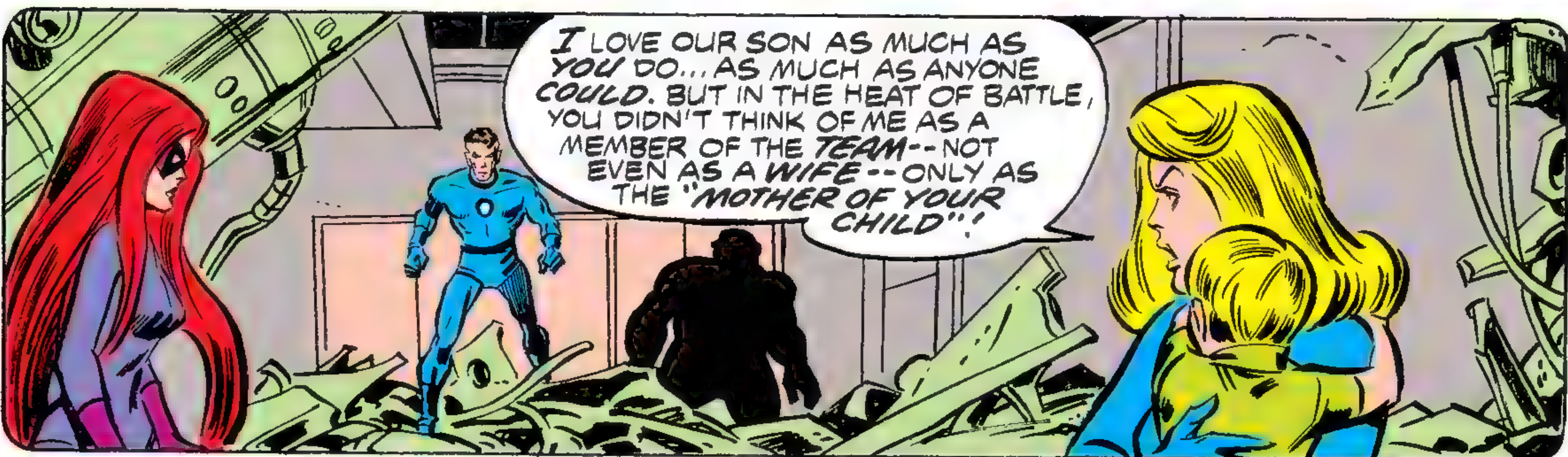


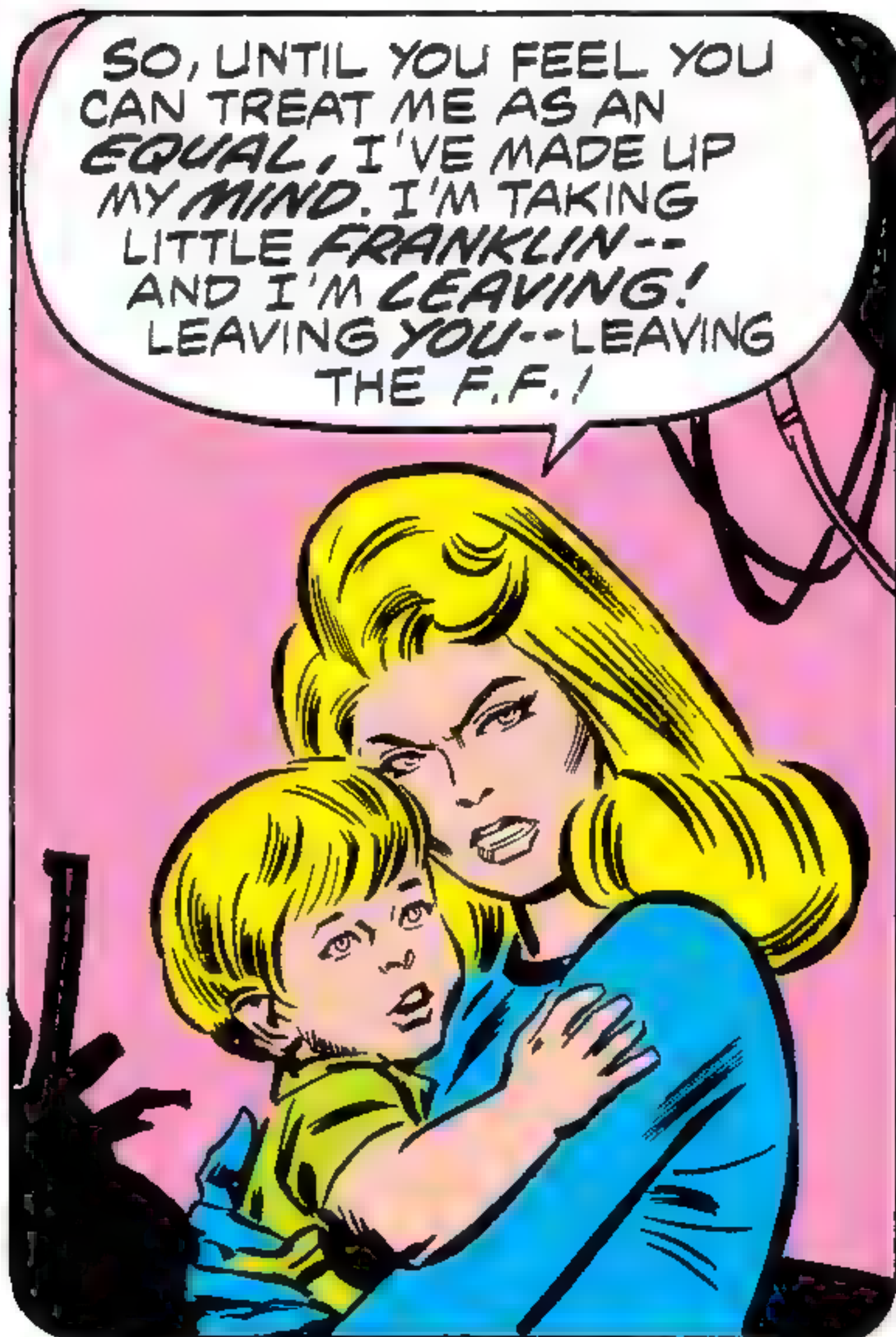
"AN' NOT EVEN REED COULD STRETCH FAR ENOUGH FER THEM TA BE STOPPED.



"YEAH, ONE BATTLE WUZ DOWN, BUT THE BIG ONE WUZ COMIN' UP SOON AS REED GOT BACK."

I LOVE OUR SON AS MUCH AS YOU DO... AS MUCH AS ANYONE COULD. BUT IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, YOU DIDN'T THINK OF ME AS A MEMBER OF THE TEAM-- NOT EVEN AS A WIFE-- ONLY AS THE "MOTHER OF YOUR CHILD"!





SO, UNTIL YOU FEEL YOU CAN TREAT ME AS AN **EQUAL**, I'VE MADE UP MY **MIND**. I'M TAKING LITTLE **FRANKLIN**-- AND I'M **LEAVING**! LEAVING YOU--LEAVING THE **F.F.**!



GOOD! AT LEAST **THAT** WAY OUR SON WILL GET A LITTLE **ATTENTION**!

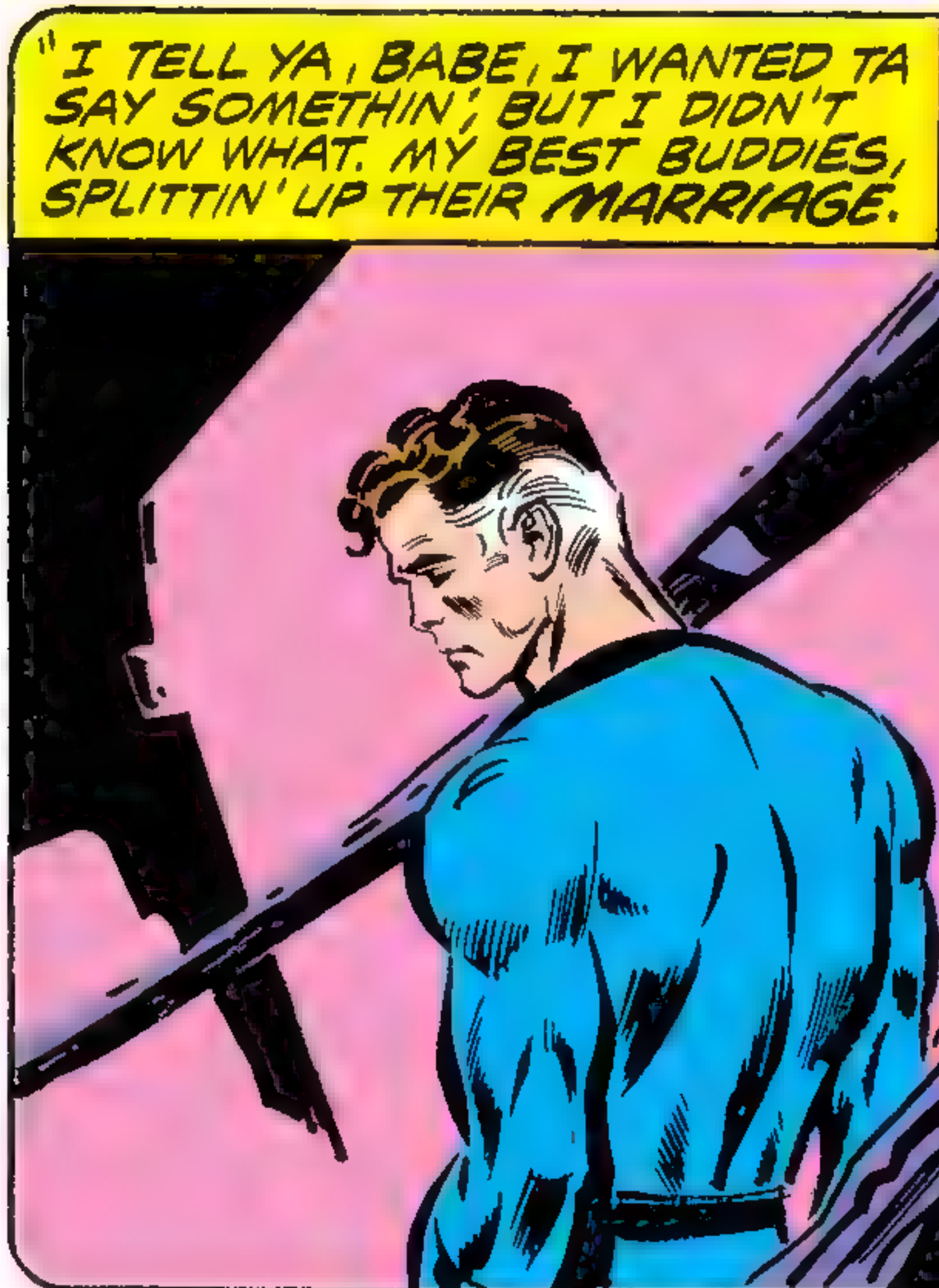


VERY WELL THEN. I'M... **GOING**.

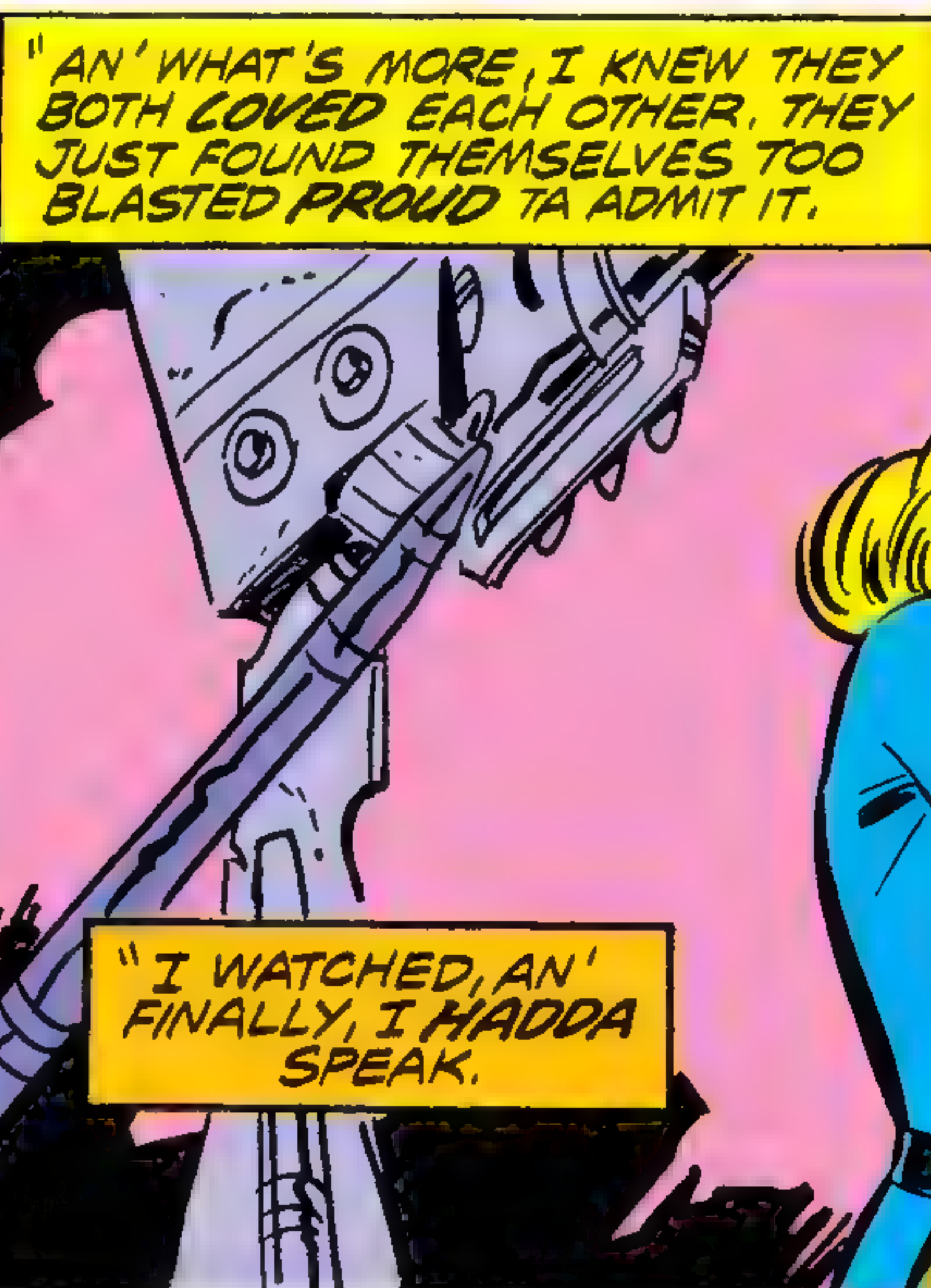
BUT... I WANT YOU TO **KNOW**, REED, THAT--

DON'T **TALK** IT TO DEATH, LADY. IF YOU'RE **GOING** TO GO...

THEN **GO**!



"I TELL YA, BABE, I WANTED TA SAY SOMETHIN', BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT. MY BEST BUDDIES, SPLITTIN' UP THEIR **MARRIAGE**.



"AN' WHAT'S MORE, I KNEW THEY BOTH **COVED** EACH OTHER. THEY JUST FOUND THEMSELVES TOO **BLASTED PROUD** TA ADMIT IT.

"I WATCHED, AN' FINALLY, I HADDA **SPEAK**.



REED-- **SHE** DON'T WANNA CUT OUT-- ANY MORE 'N YOU **WANT** HER TO, JUST ONE WORD FROM YOU, AN' SHE'LL--

NO, OLD FRIEND. SHE MADE THIS **DECISION**...

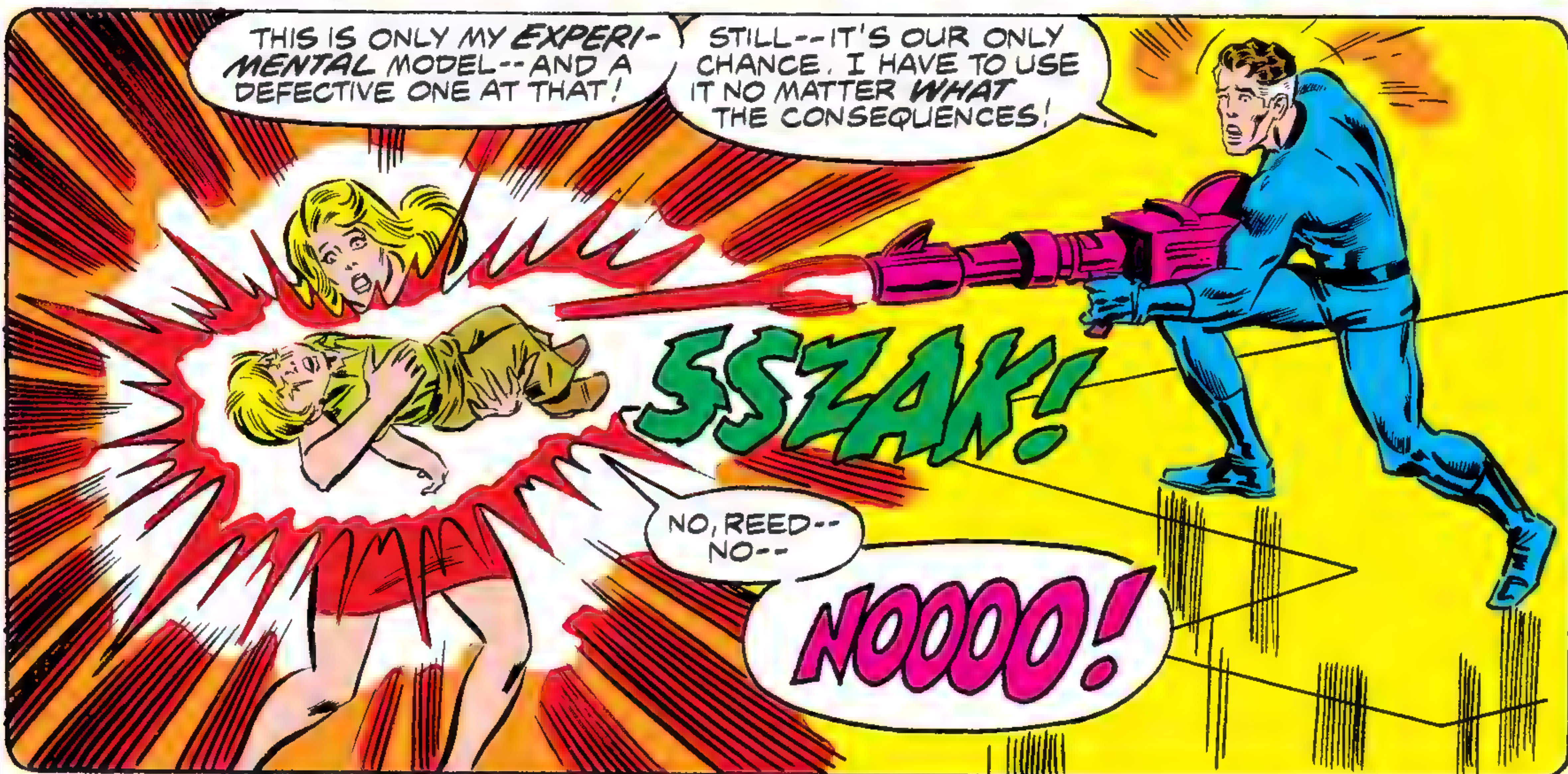
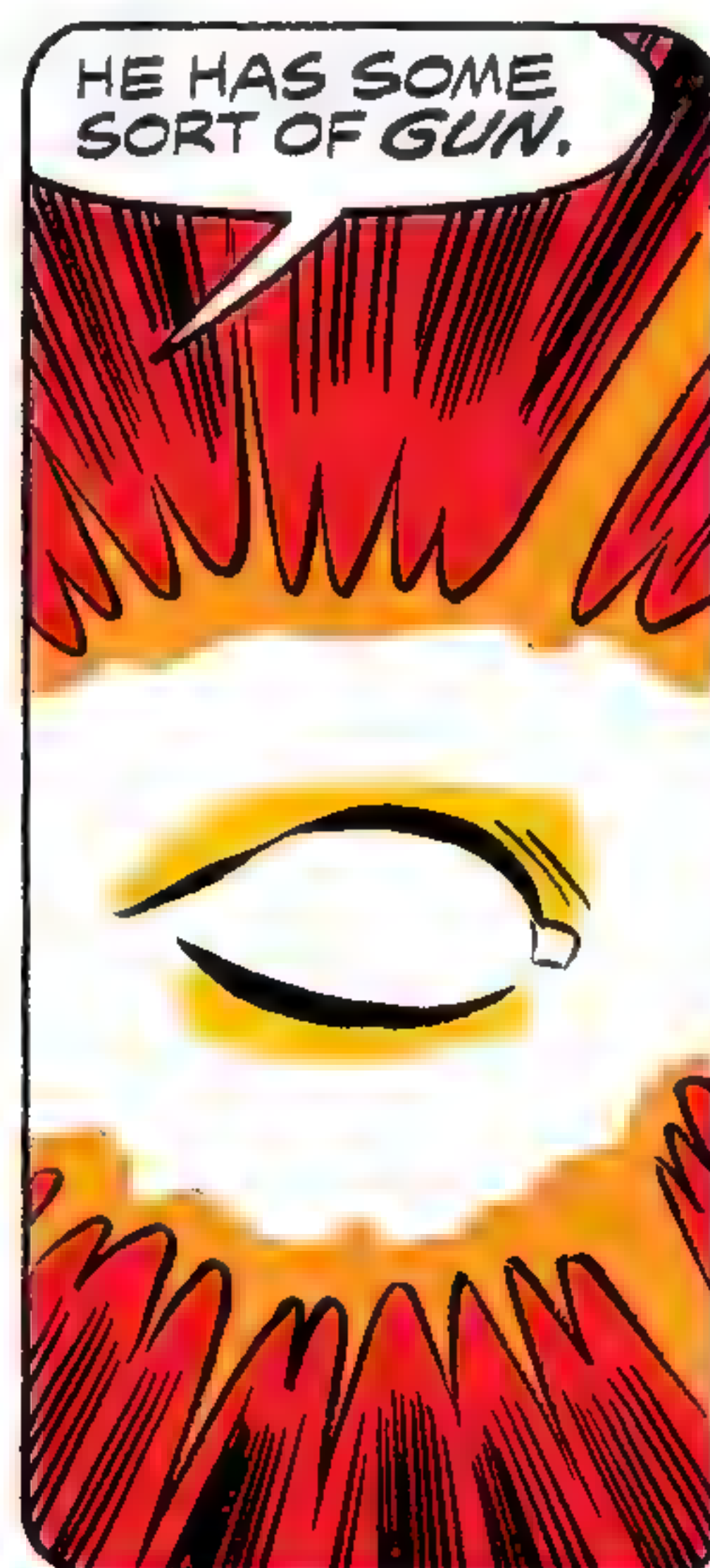
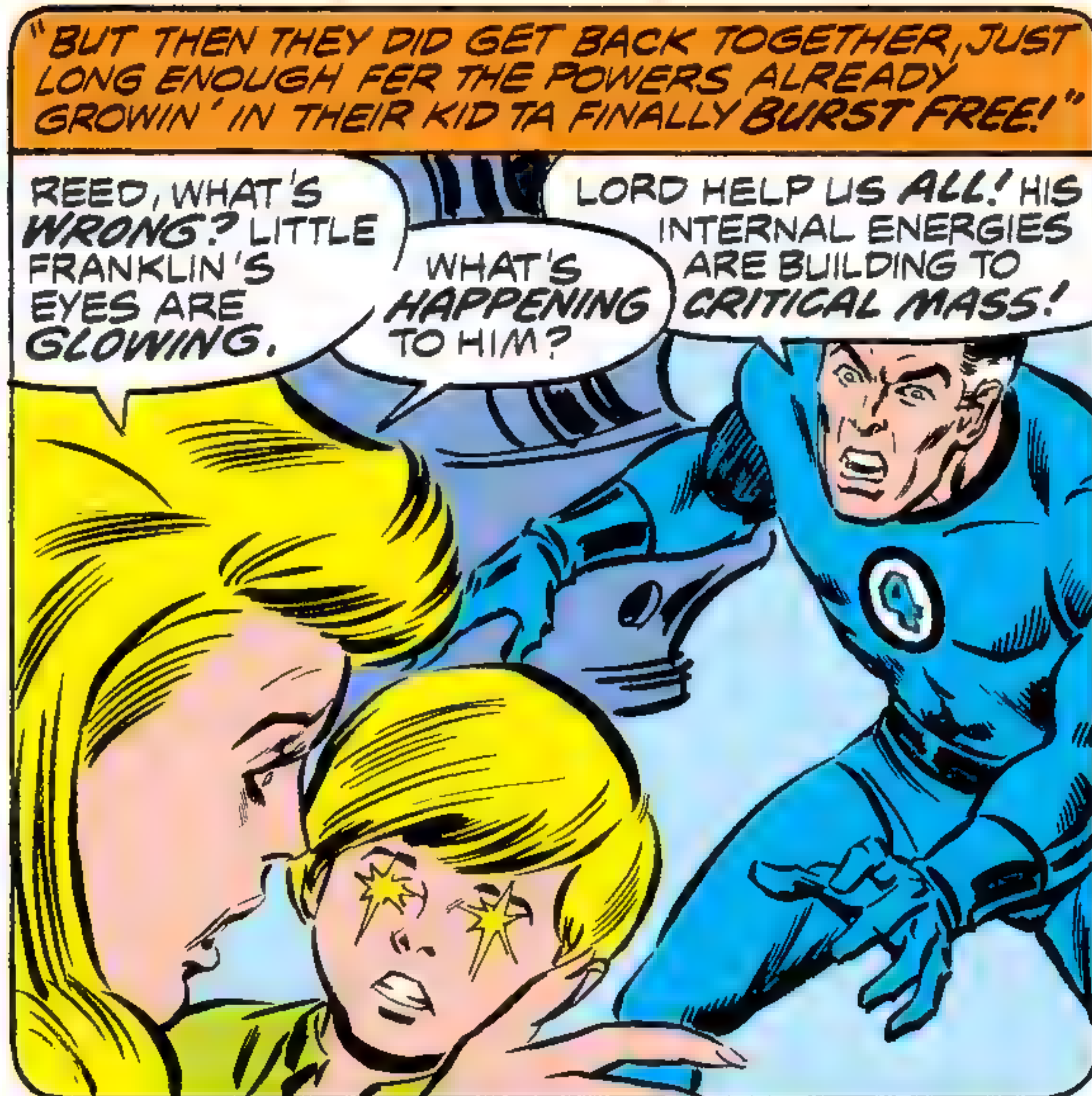
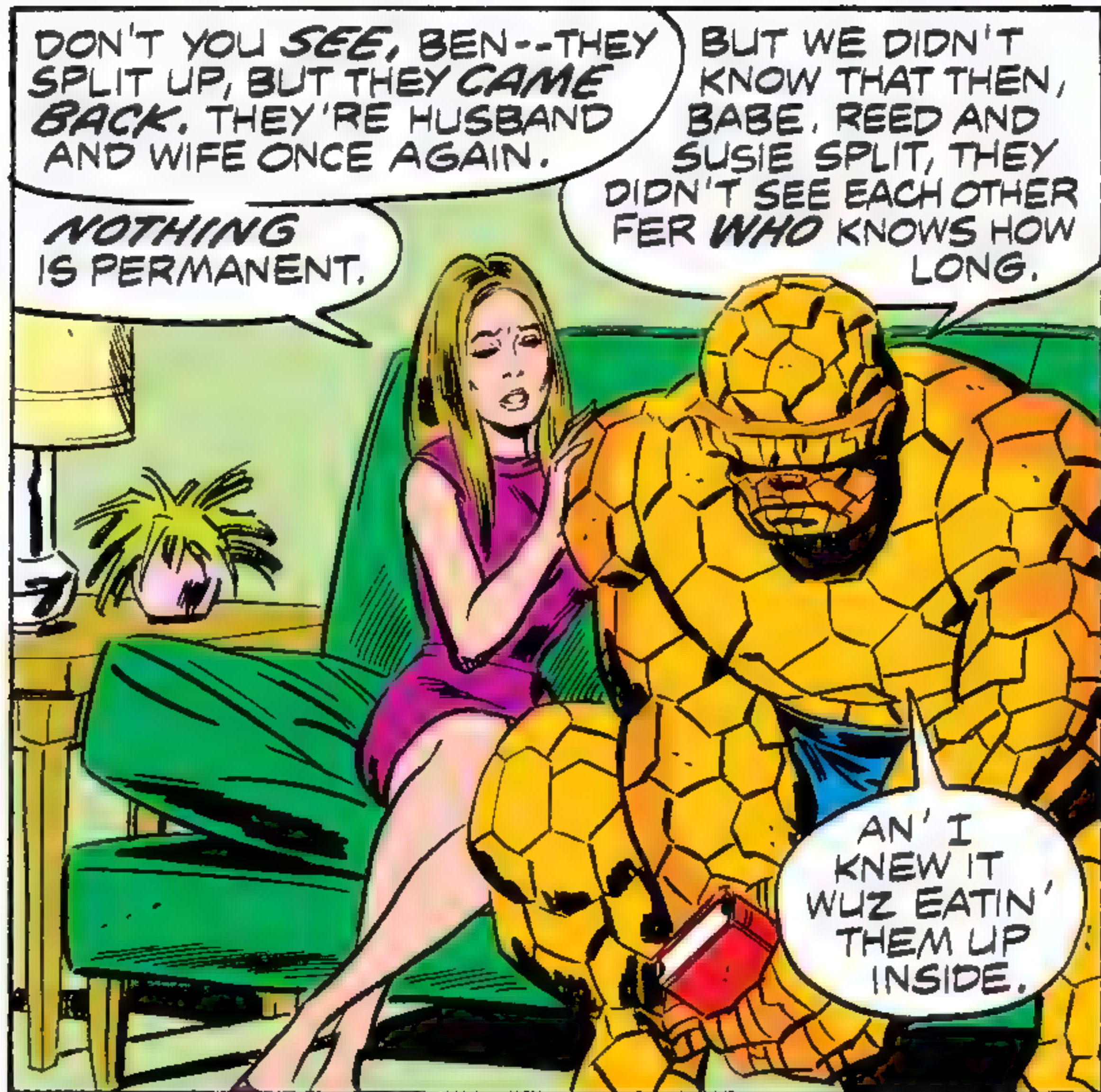
ONLY SHE CAN **UN-MAKE** IT.



LISTEN, WE'RE GOING TO FIND **JOHNNY STORM**-- PERSUADE **HIM** TO COME BACK, AT LEAST--

--AND THEN, WITH OR WITHOUT AN **INVISIBLE GIRL**-- NO MATTER **WHAT** HAPPENS--

THE FANTASTIC FOUR WILL GO ON!



"AN' THAT'S WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA SEE THE LAST OF THE F.F.--FEREVER!"

'CAUSE THAT SPARKLE THAT SHINES IN A KID'S EYES--JUST SLOWLY DIED...

"...AND IT WAS REPLACED WITH *NOTHIN'*!"

"REED SOMEHOW TURNED OFF HIS VERY OWN KID!"

I HAD TO DO IT, SUE. HE WAS BECOMING TOO POWERFUL!

I WISH THERE'D BEEN ANOTHER WAY!

WHAT--WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM, REED?

HIS MIND... I'VE SHUT DOWN HIS MIND!

THEN YOU'VE TURNED HIM INTO A VEGETABLE, YOUR OWN SON...!

DON'T YOU SEE, SUE? HE WAS TOO POWERFUL... IF HIS ENERGY HAD CONTINUED TO BUILD, HE'D HAVE DESTROYED THE WORLD!

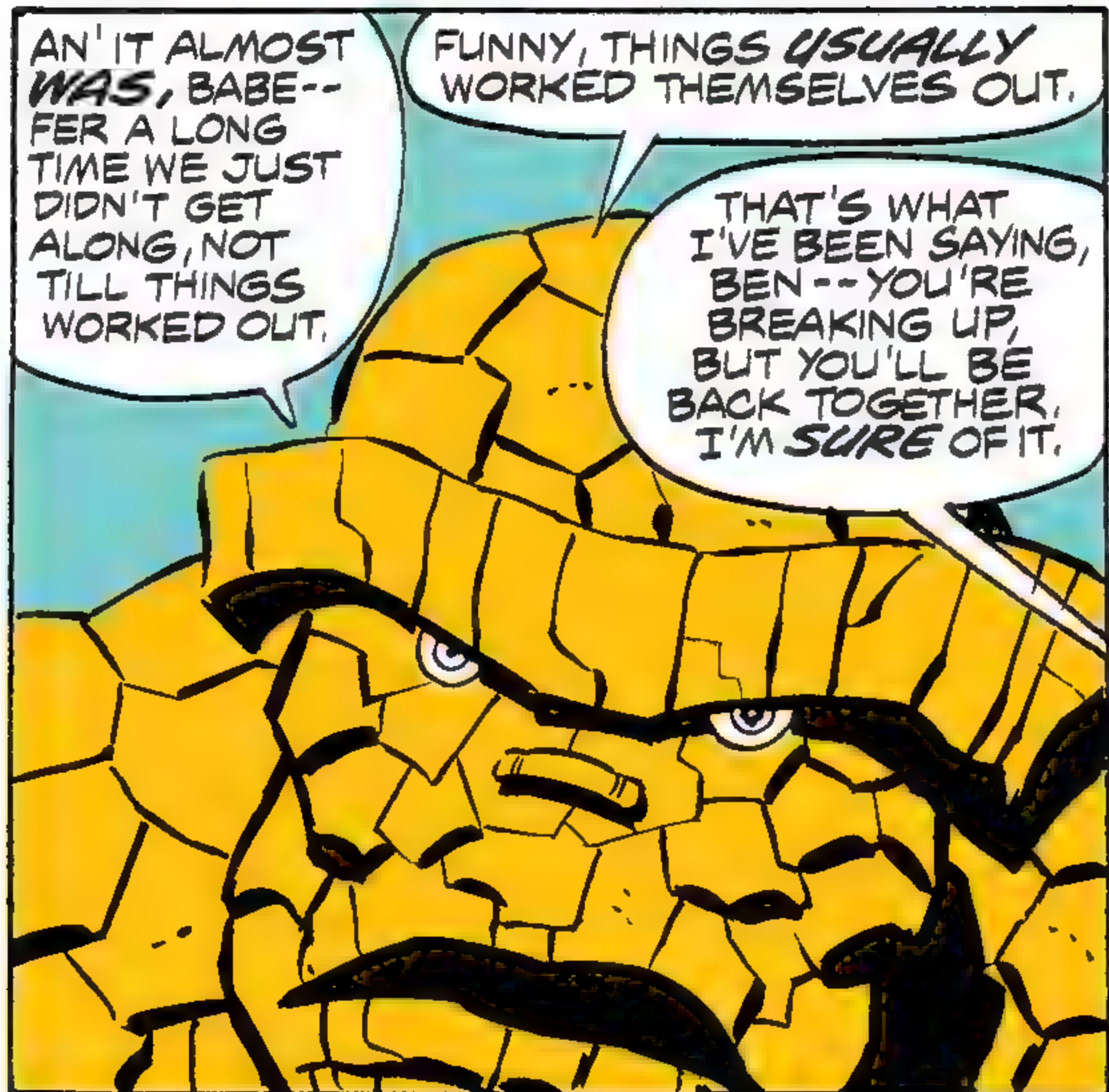
BUT HE WAS YOUR SON...

DO YOU THINK I WANTED TO DO IT? I HAD NO CHOICE... THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO!

LOOKS LIKE WE AIN'T GOT NO CHOICE EITHER, RICHARDS.

'CAUSE AFTER WHAT YOU JUST DID, THERE CAN'T BE A TEAM ANYMORE. THIS IS THE END, MISTER--

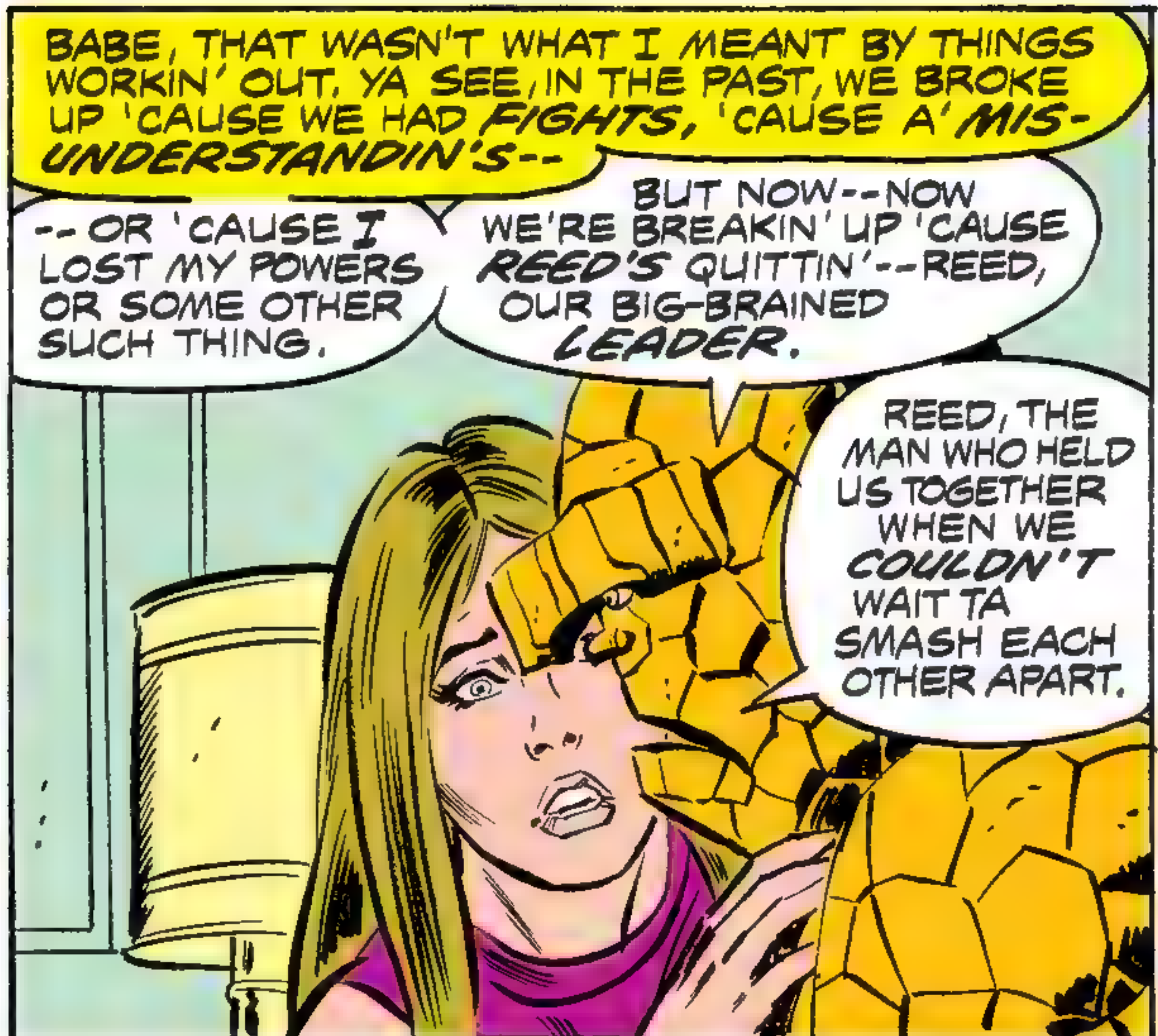
THE **END** OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR!**



AN' IT ALMOST **WAS**, BABE-- FER A LONG TIME WE JUST DIDN'T GET ALONG, NOT TILL THINGS WORKED OUT.

FUNNY, THINGS *USUALLY* WORKED THEMSELVES OUT.

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING, BEN-- YOU'RE BREAKING UP, BUT YOU'LL BE BACK TOGETHER, I'M *SURE* OF IT.

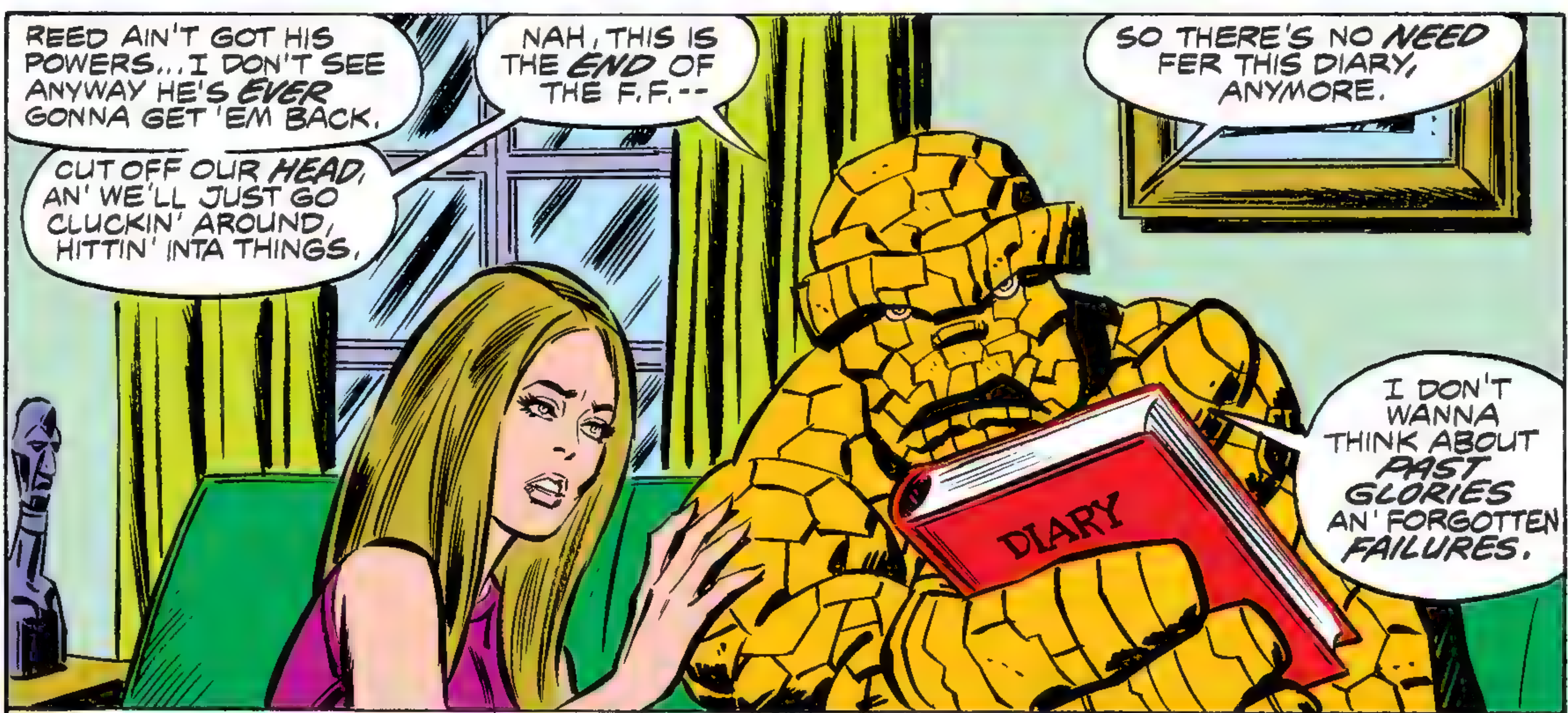


BABE, THAT WASN'T WHAT I MEANT BY THINGS WORKIN' OUT. YA SEE, IN THE PAST, WE BROKE UP 'CAUSE WE HAD *FIGHTS*, 'CAUSE A' *MIS-UNDERSTANDIN'S*--

-- OR 'CAUSE I LOST MY POWERS OR SOME OTHER SUCH THING.

BUT NOW-- NOW WE'RE BREAKIN' UP 'CAUSE *REED'S* QUITTIN'-- REED, OUR BIG-BRAINED *LEADER*.

REED, THE MAN WHO HELD US TOGETHER WHEN WE *COULDN'T* WAIT TA SMASH EACH OTHER APART.



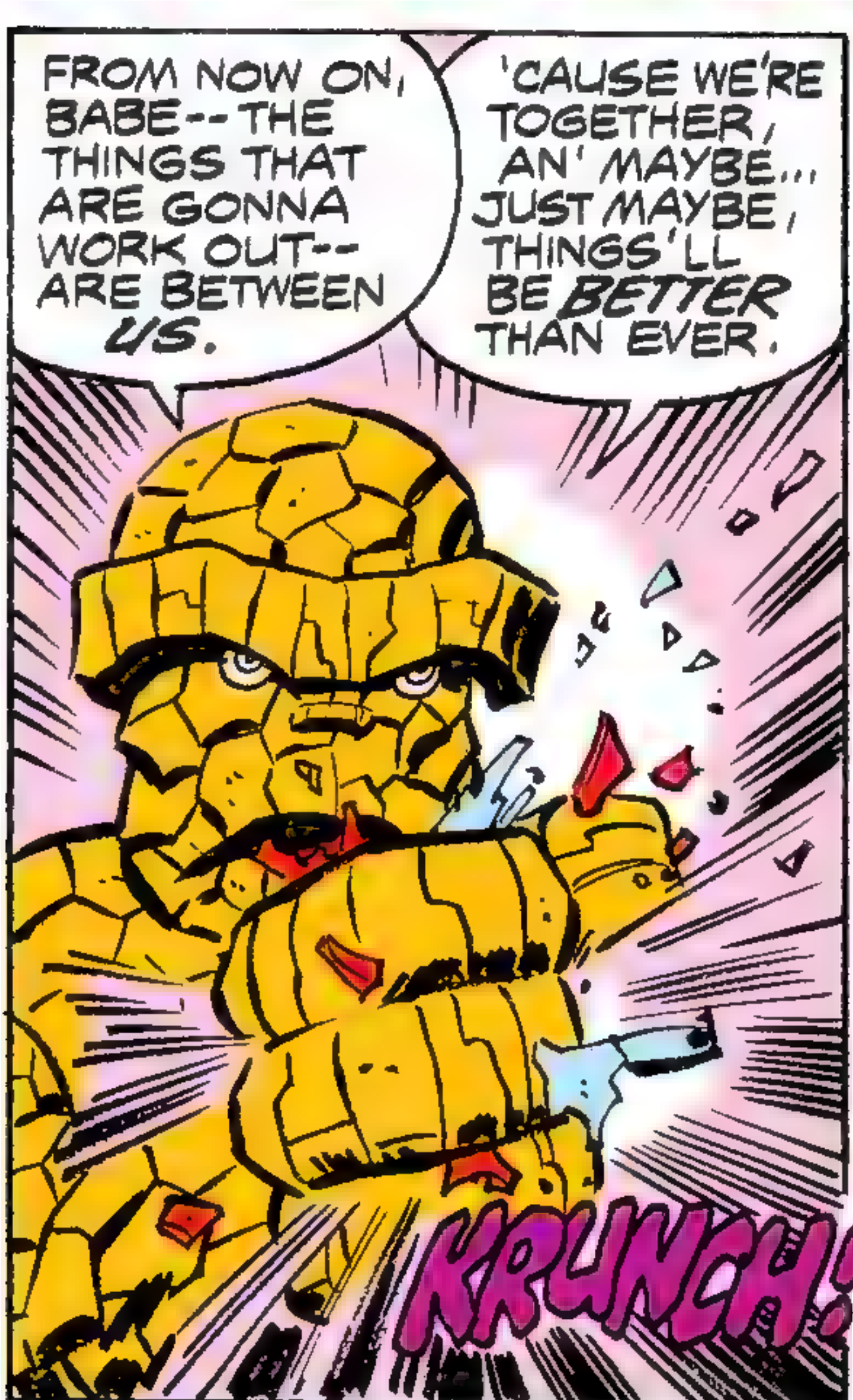
REED AIN'T GOT HIS POWERS... I DON'T SEE ANYWAY HE'S *EVER* GONNA GET 'EM BACK.

NAH, THIS IS THE *END* OF THE F.F.--

SO THERE'S NO *NEED* FER THIS DIARY, ANYMORE.

CUT OFF OUR *HEAD*, AN' WE'LL JUST GO CLUCKIN' AROUND, HITTIN' INTA THINGS.

I DON'T WANNA THINK ABOUT *PAST GLORIES* AN' FORGOTTEN *FAILURES*.



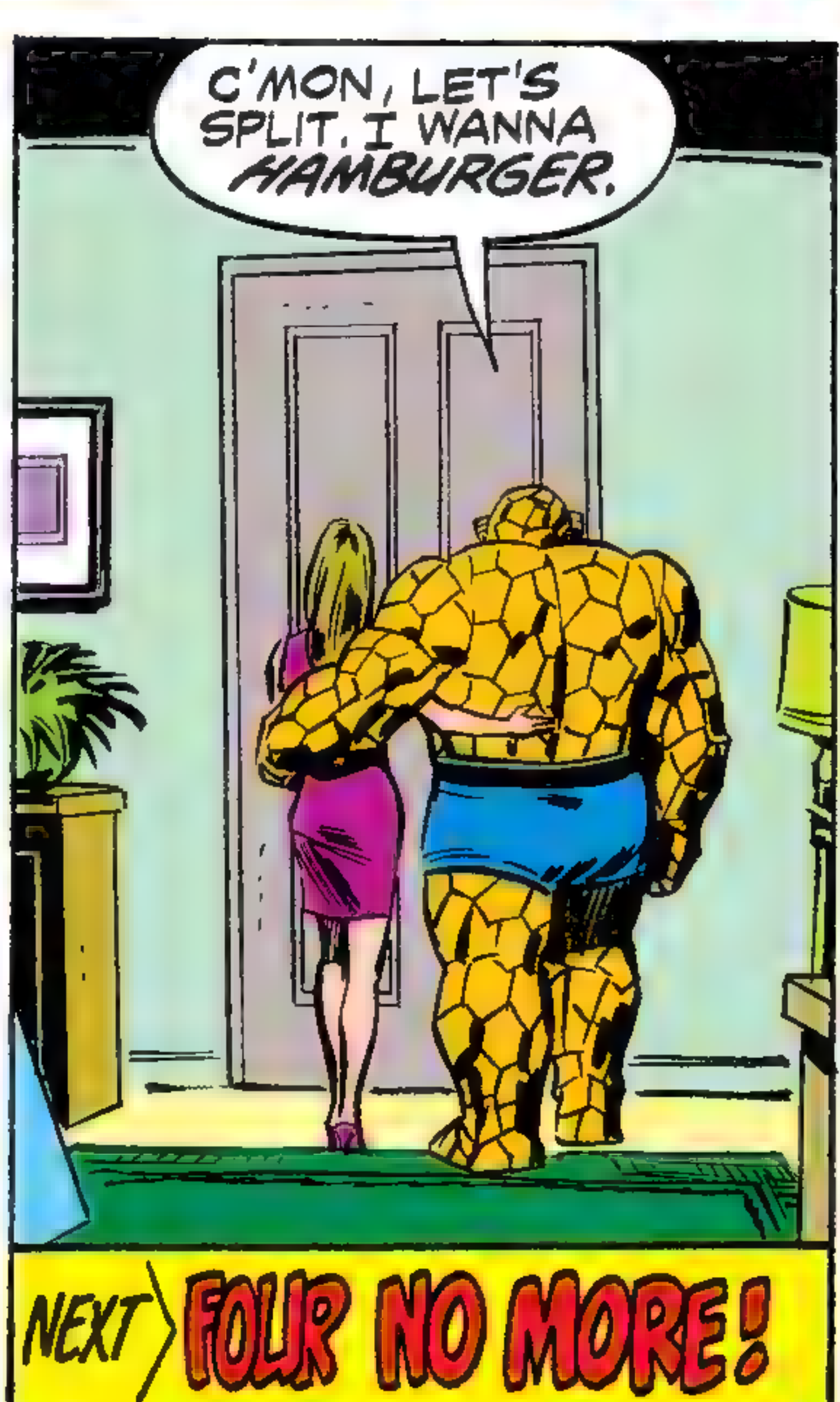
FROM NOW ON, BABE-- THE THINGS THAT ARE GONNA WORK OUT-- ARE BETWEEN *US*.

'CAUSE WE'RE TOGETHER, AN' MAYBE... JUST MAYBE, THINGS'LL BE *BETTER* THAN EVER.



YA KNOW, BABE-- THINKIN' ABOUT IT, I'M SORTA *HAPPY* WE BUSTED UP.

MEBBE NOW I'LL FINALLY GET TA KNOW WHO *BEN GRIMM* REALLY IS.



C'MON, LET'S SPLIT. I WANNA *HAMBURGER*.

NEXT **FOUR NO MORE!**

FANTASTIC
FOUR[®]

35¢



191
FEB
02462

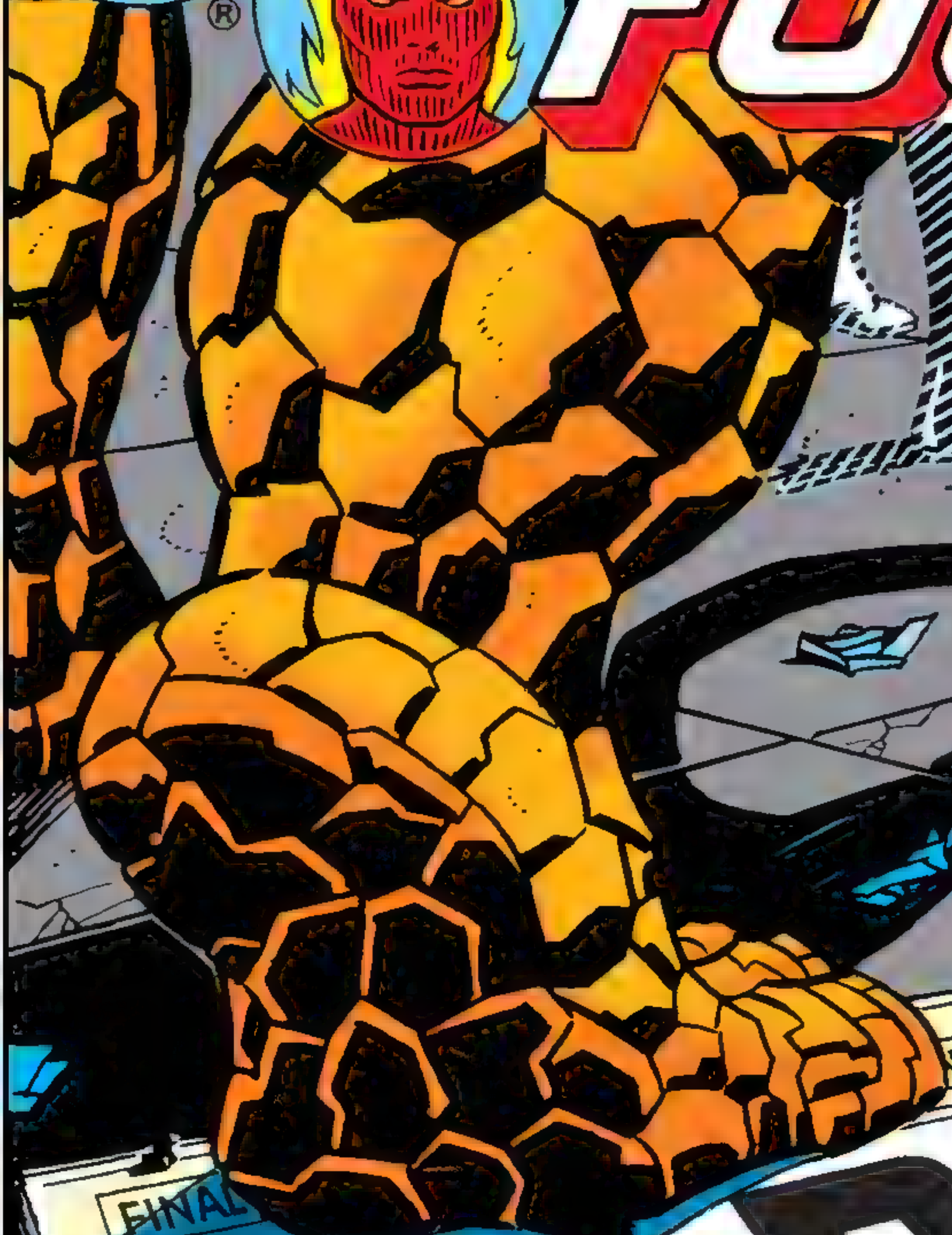
©1977 MARVEL
COMICS GROUP

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR[®]

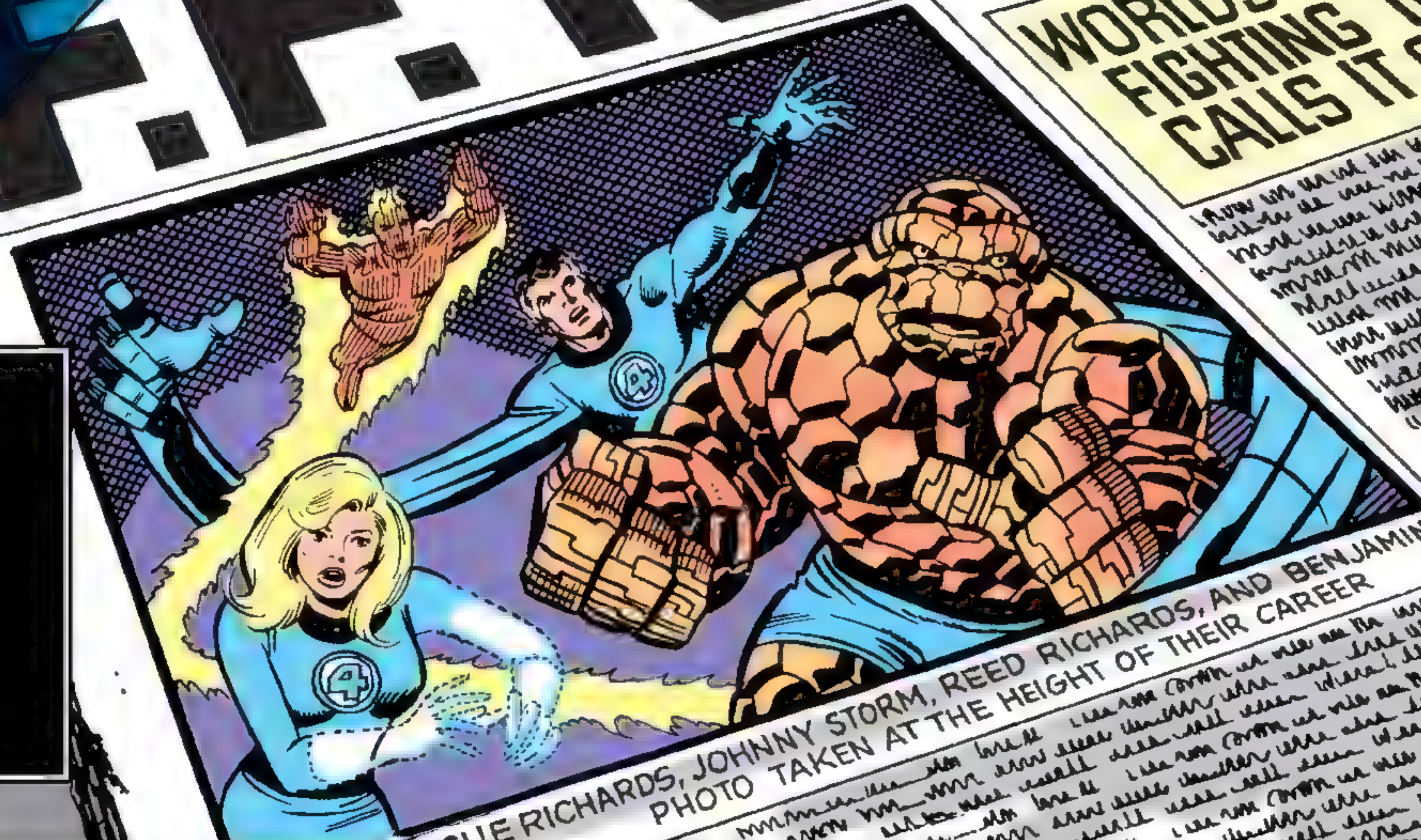


BUGLE 20¢

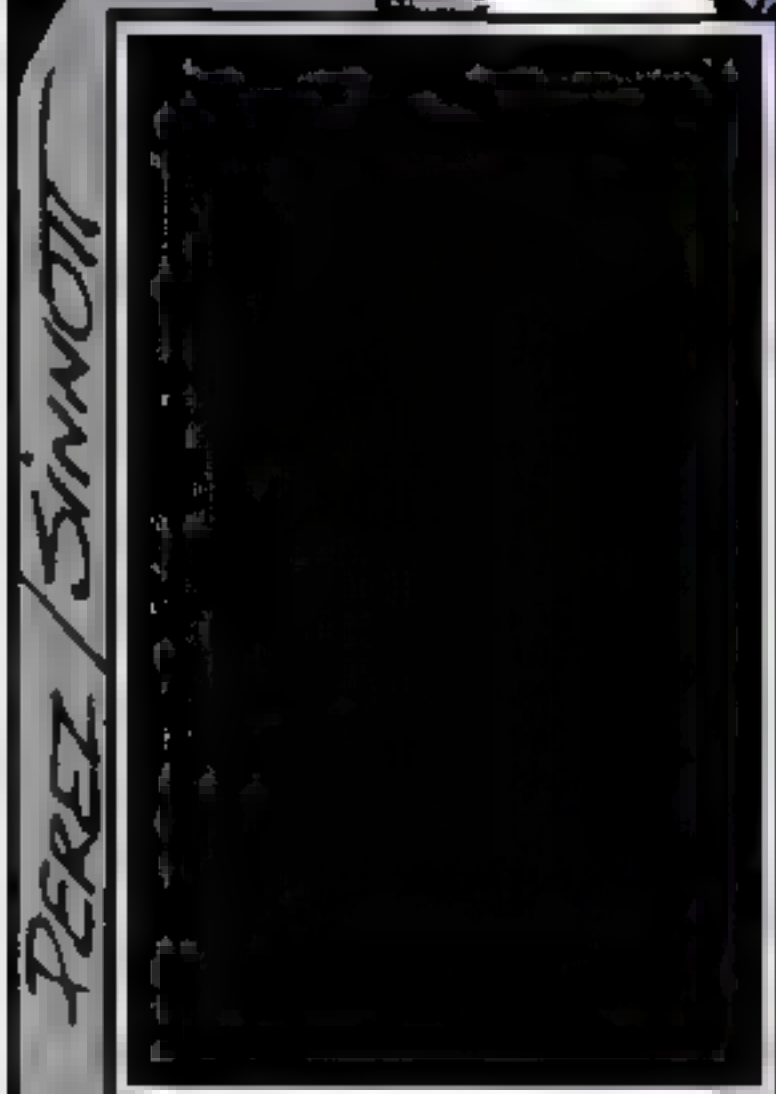
FINAL

F.F. RESIGN!

WORLD'S GREATEST FIGHTING TEAM CALLS IT QUITS!



THE RICHARDS, JOHNNY STORM, REED RICHARDS, AND BENJAMIN
PHOTO TAKEN AT THE HEIGHT OF THEIR CAREER



A brilliant scientist— his best friend— the woman he loves— and her fiery-tempered kid brother! Together, they braved the unknown terrors of outer space, and were changed by cosmic rays into something more than merely human! MR. FANTASTIC! THE THING! THE INVISIBLE GIRL! THE HUMAN TORCH! Now they are the FANTASTIC FOUR— and the world will never be the same again!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE FANTASTIC FOUR!**™

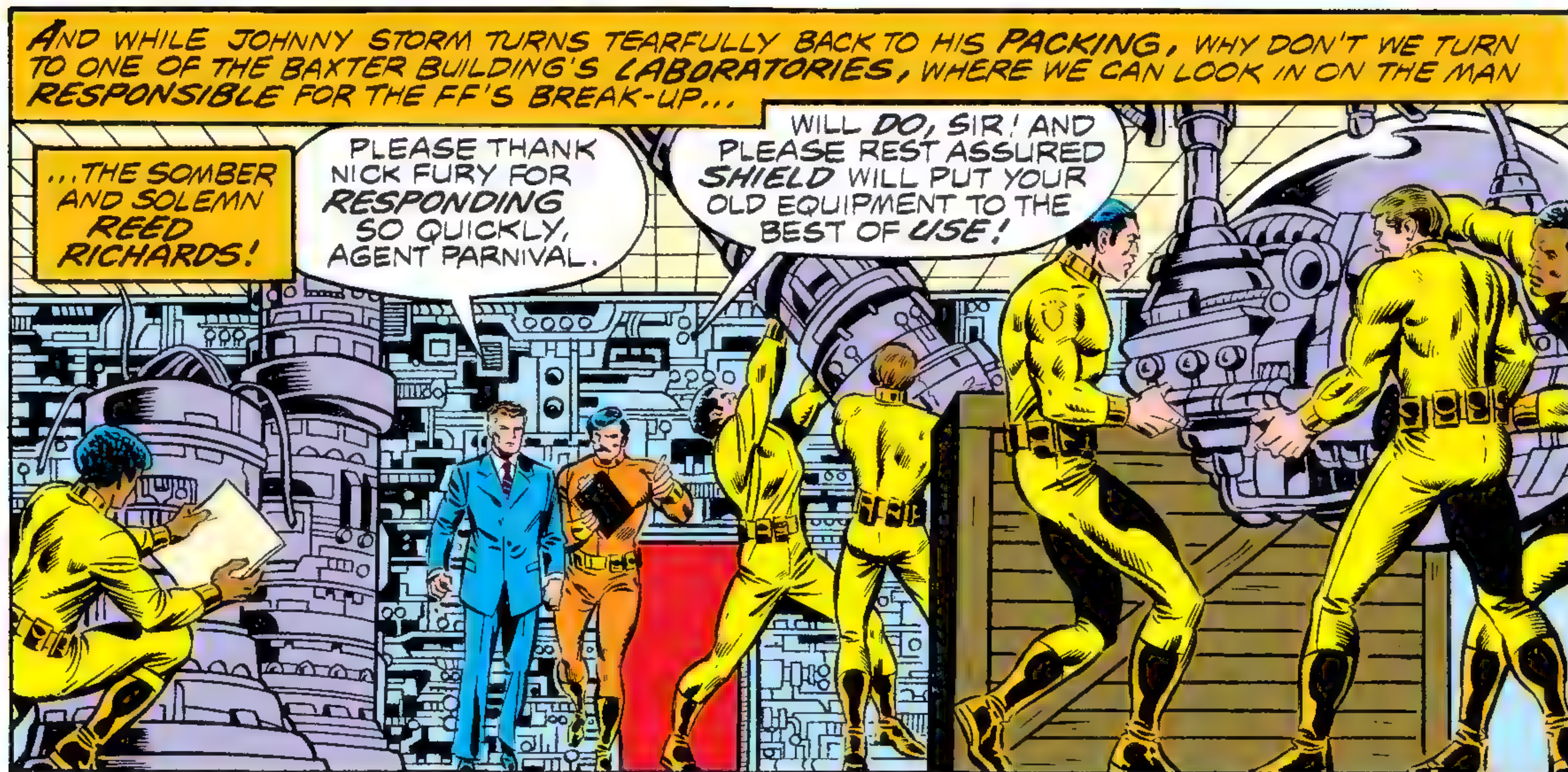
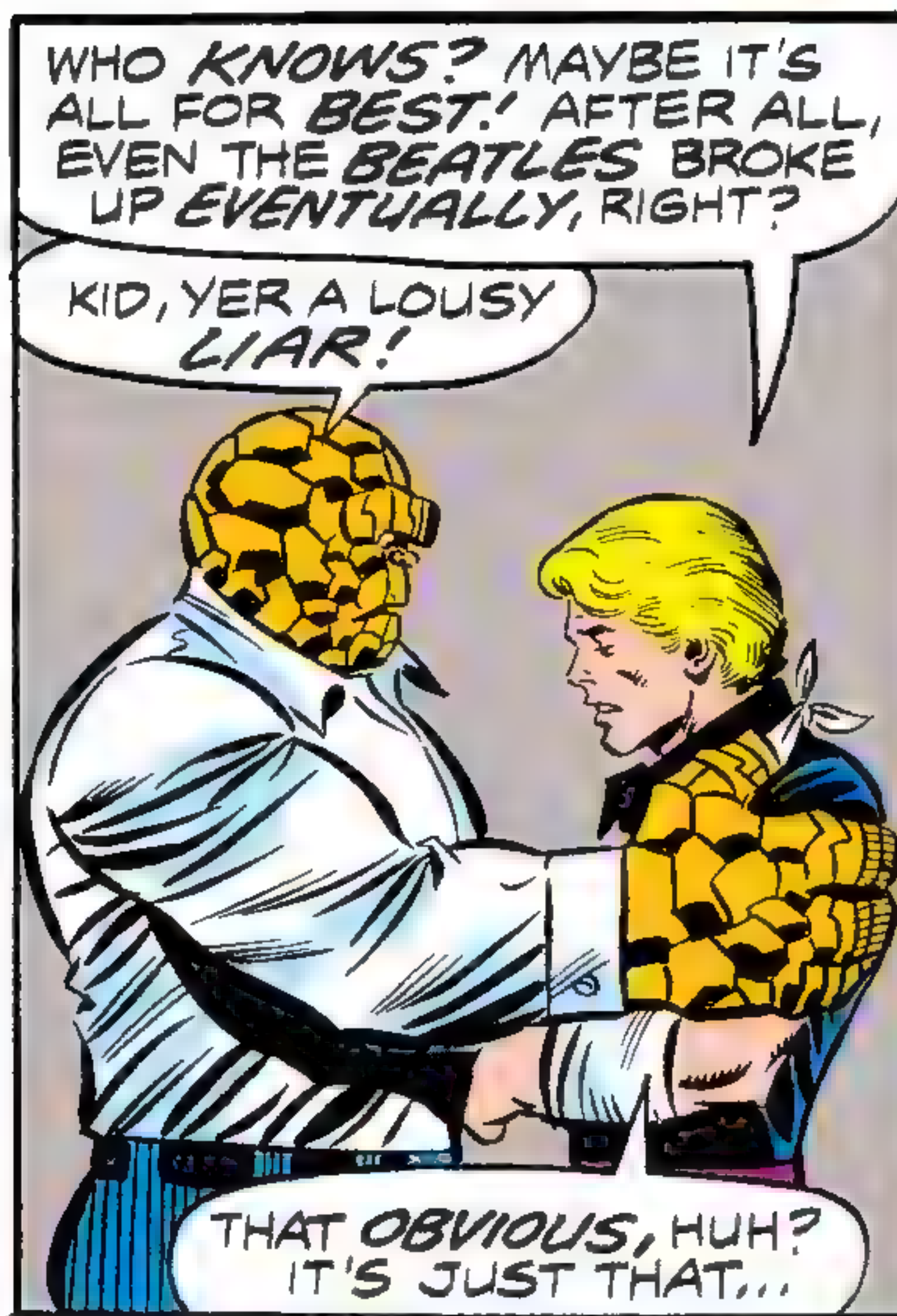
LEN WEIN
WRITER/EDITOR

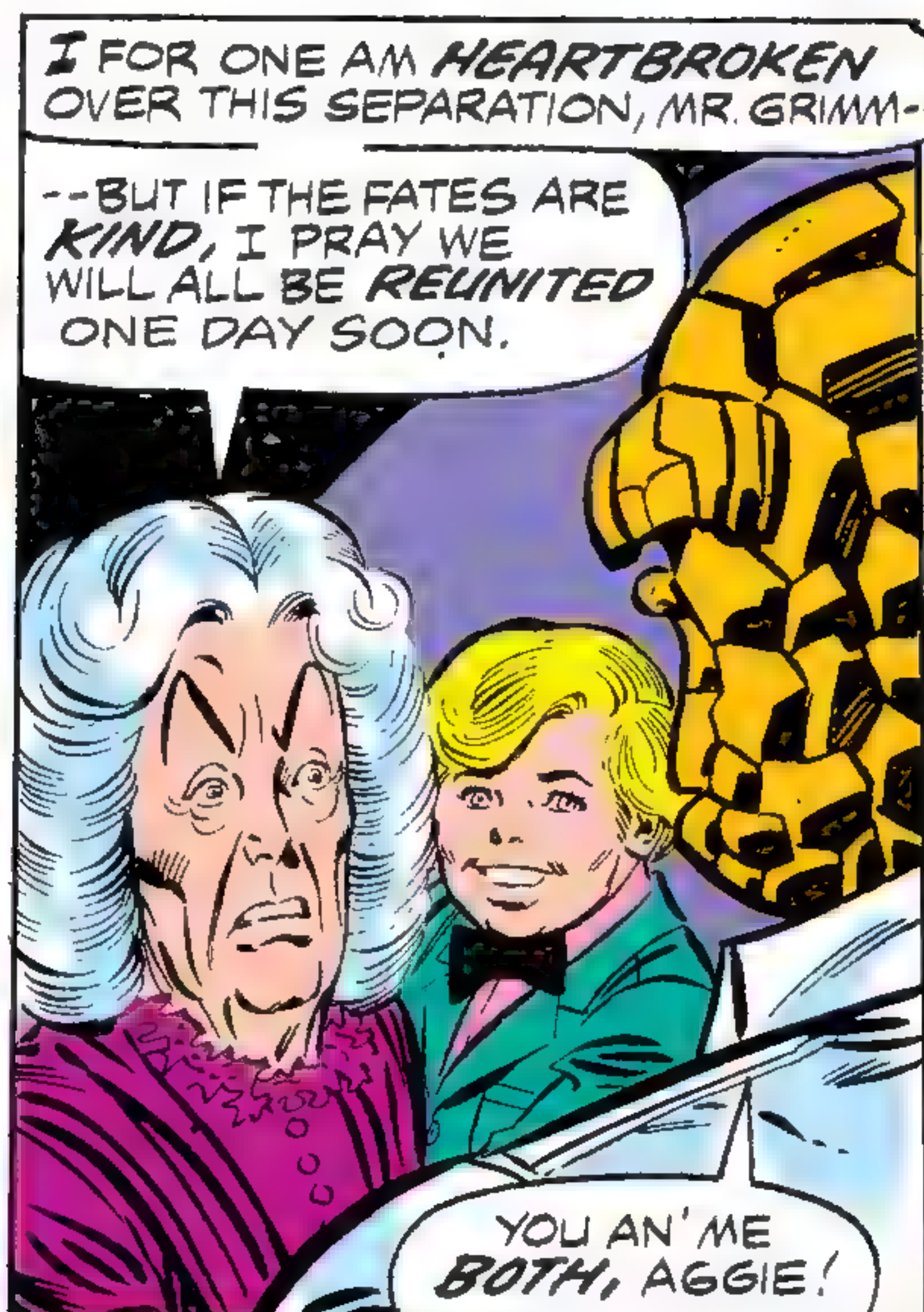
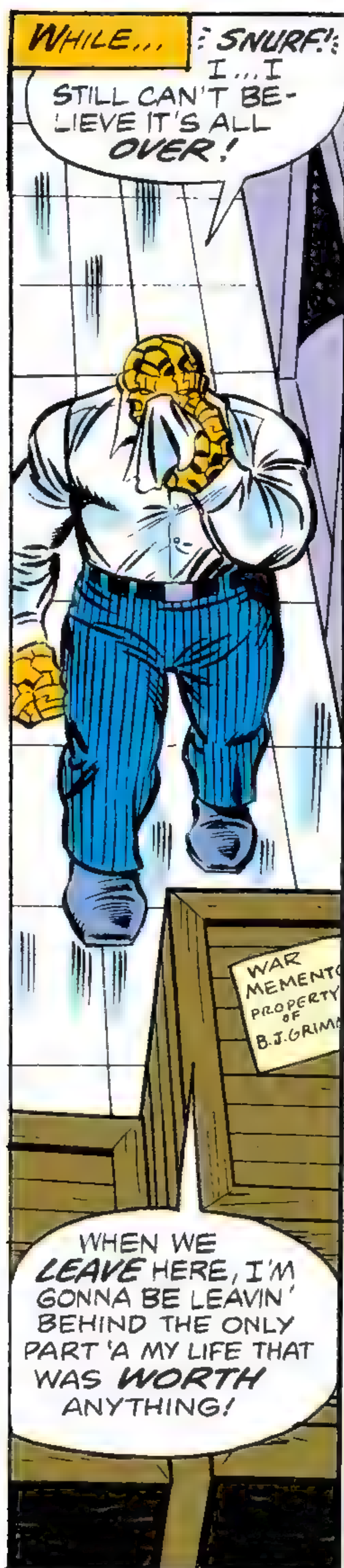
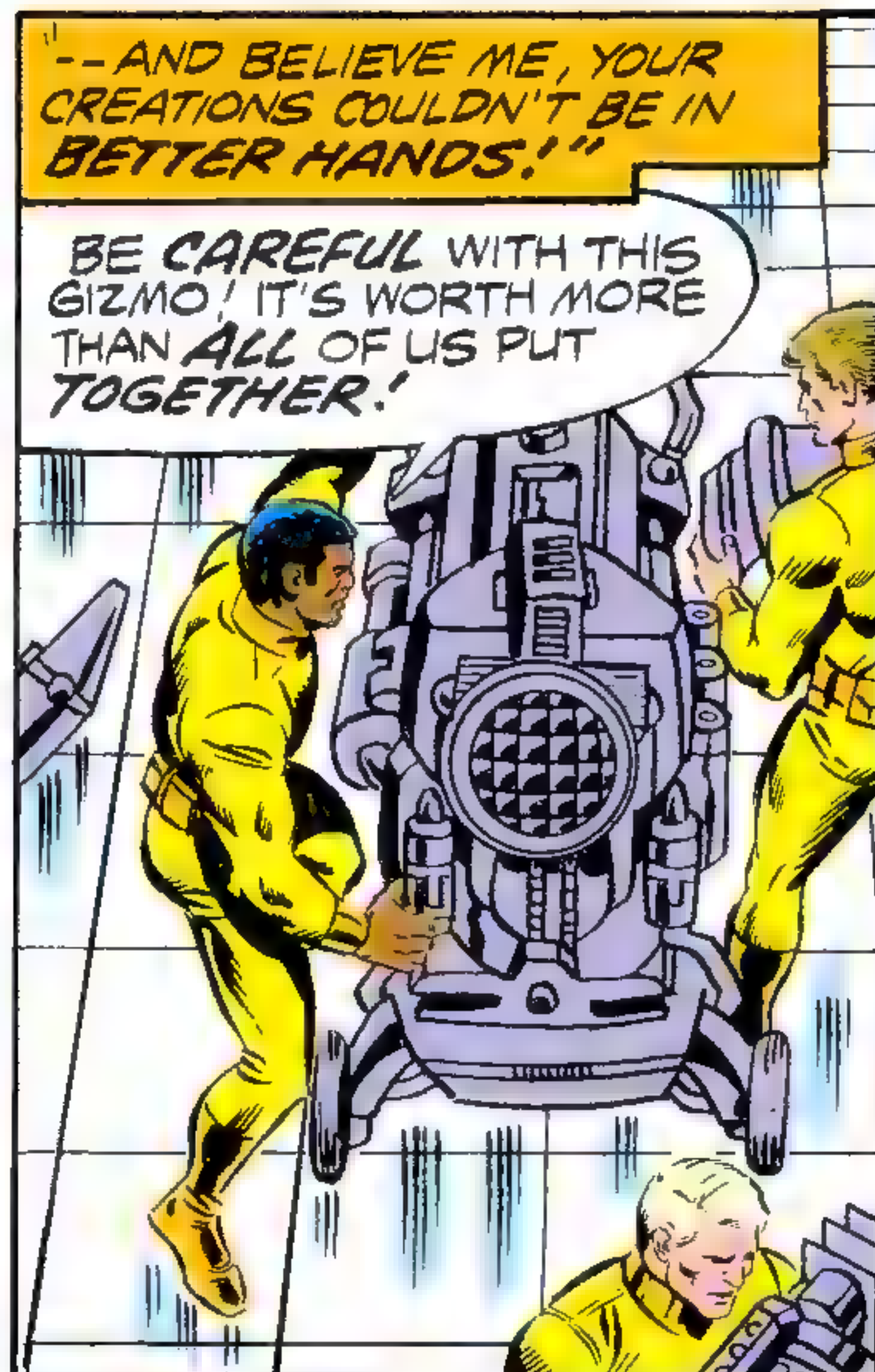
GEORGE PEREZ & JOE SINNOTT
ARTISTS / STORYTELLERS

GLYNIS WEIN
colorist

JOHN COSTANZA
letterer







BUT EVEN AS BASHFUL BENJY LUMBERS OFF TO SEEK THE POUNDING'S CAUSE, THE PACKING IN THE LAB CONTINUES--

--AS, ONE BY ONE, THE PIECES OF FOUR PEOPLE'S LIVES ARE CRATED, CATALOGUED, AND CARRIED AWAY...



... LEAVING REED RICHARDS FEELING MORE EMPTY THAN HE EVER HAS BEFORE!

HAVE TO KEEP TELLING MYSELF IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST, OR...

IT'S REALLY NOT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO STAY, MR. RICHARDS! WE CAN HANDLE THINGS HERE!



IT COULDN'T HURT FOR ME TO DOUBLE-CHECK, PARNIVAL!

BUT I ASSURE YOU WE'RE QUITE CAPABLE OF... HUH?

HEY, REED-- LOOKIT WHAT I FOUND!



OH NO!

I CAUGHT CREEPY COLLINS HERE TRYIN' TA TACK THIS TA THE FRONT DOOR!

PUT ME DOWN, YOU FREAK!



AS LANDLORD OF THIS BUILDING, I WAS COMPLETELY WITHIN MY RIGHTS!

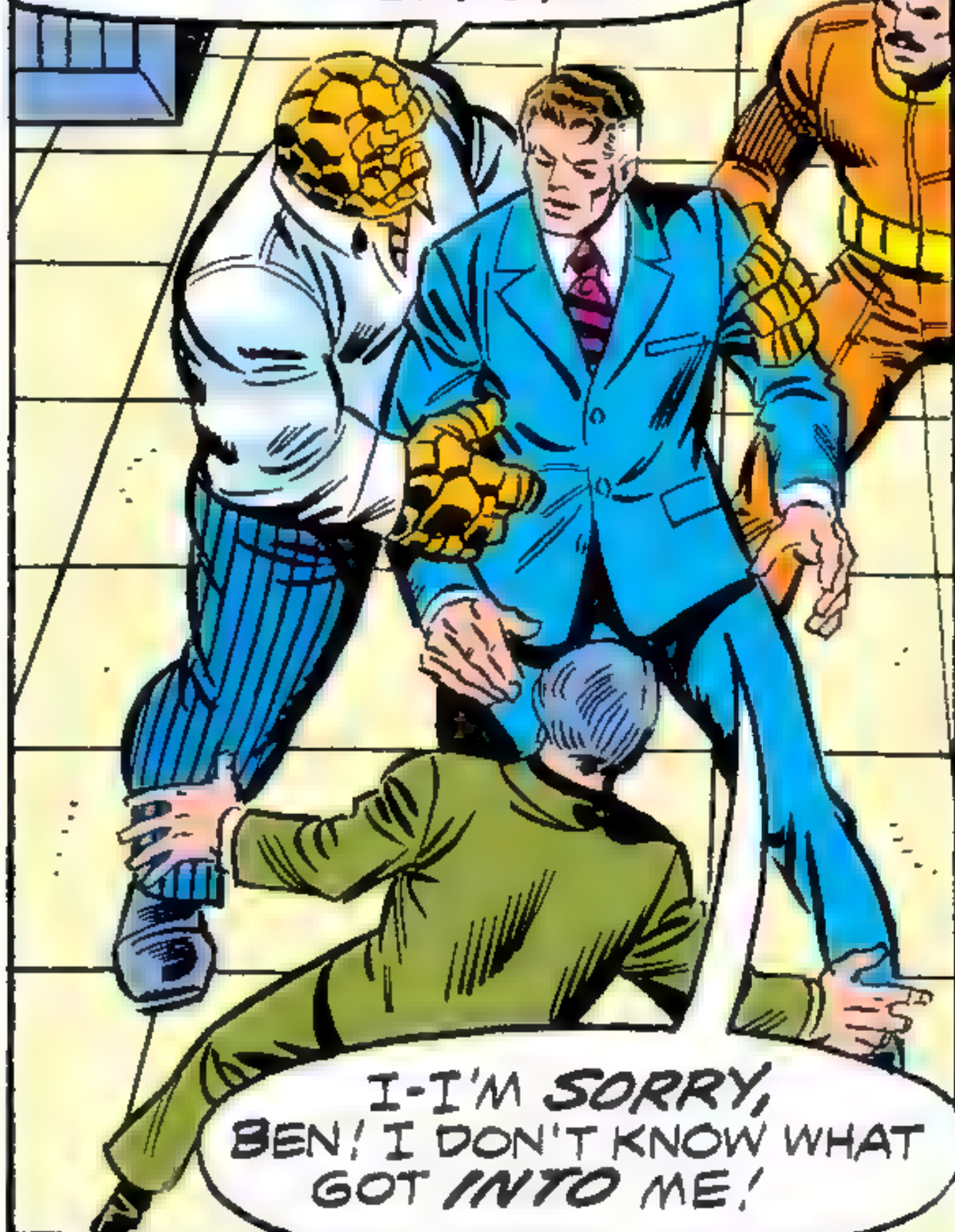
MAYBE SO, COLLINS-- BUT YOU STILL COULD HAVE HAD THE COMMON DECENCY TO WAIT UNTIL WE LEFT!

I KNOW WE WERE NEVER YOUR FAVORITE TENANTS-- BUT IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GLOAT...



I'LL... I'LL FLATTEN YOU FIRST!

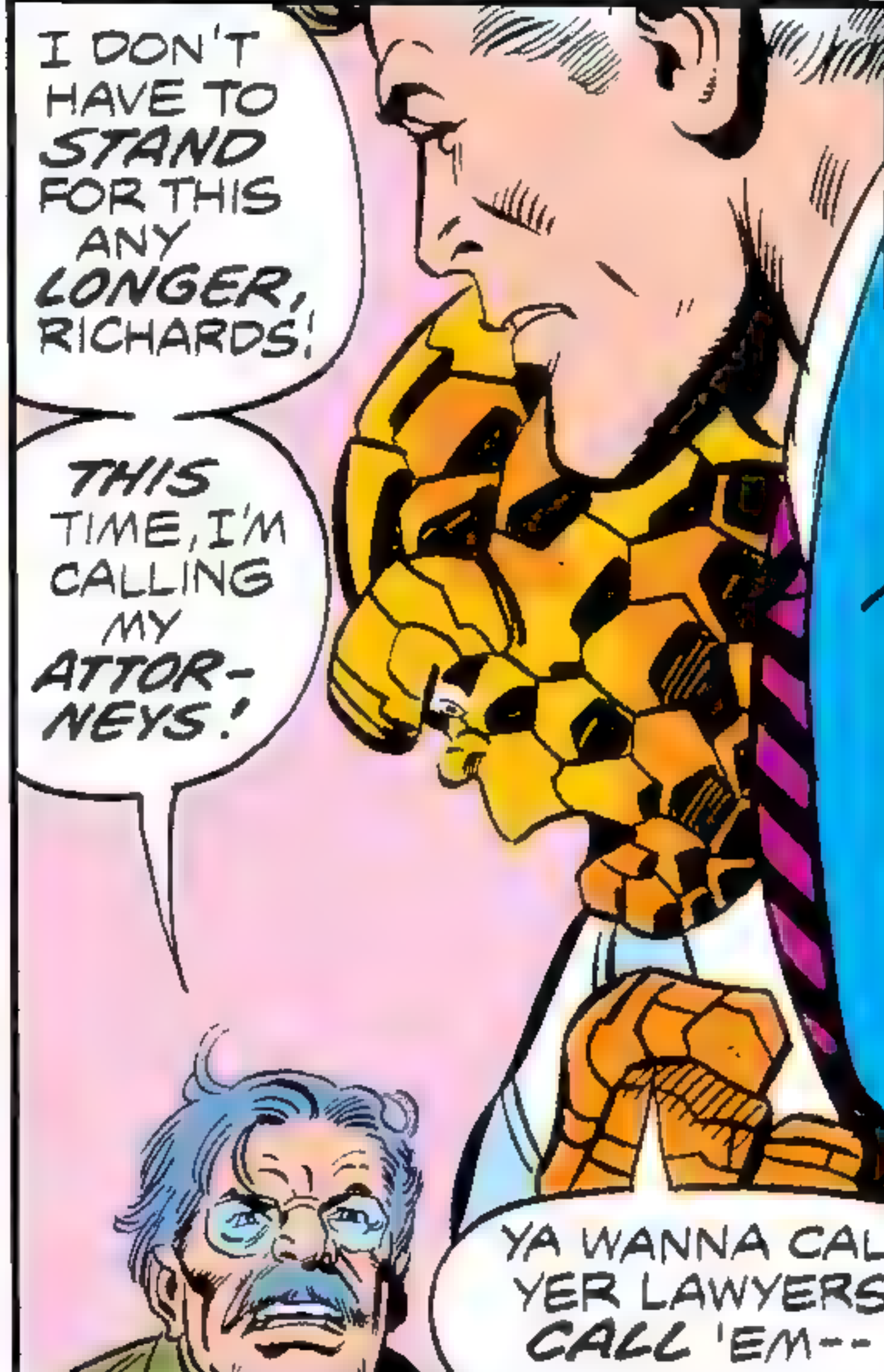
HEY-- EASY, STRETCH! OL' WALRUS-PUSS JUST AIN'T WORTH THE EFFORT!



I-I'M SORRY, BEN! I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOT INTO ME!

I DON'T HAVE TO STAND FOR THIS ANY LONGER, RICHARDS!

THIS TIME, I'M CALLING MY ATTOR-NEYS!

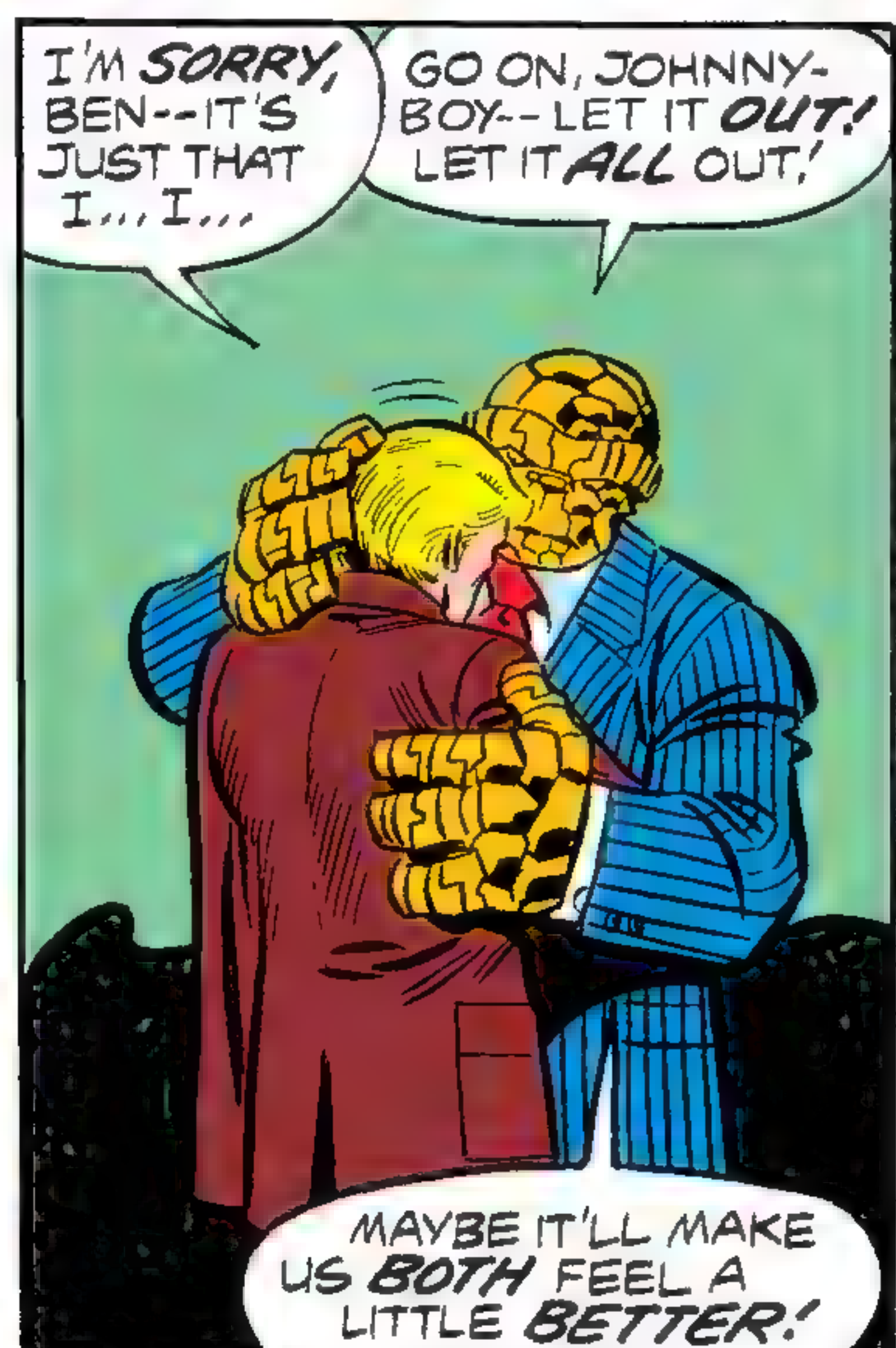
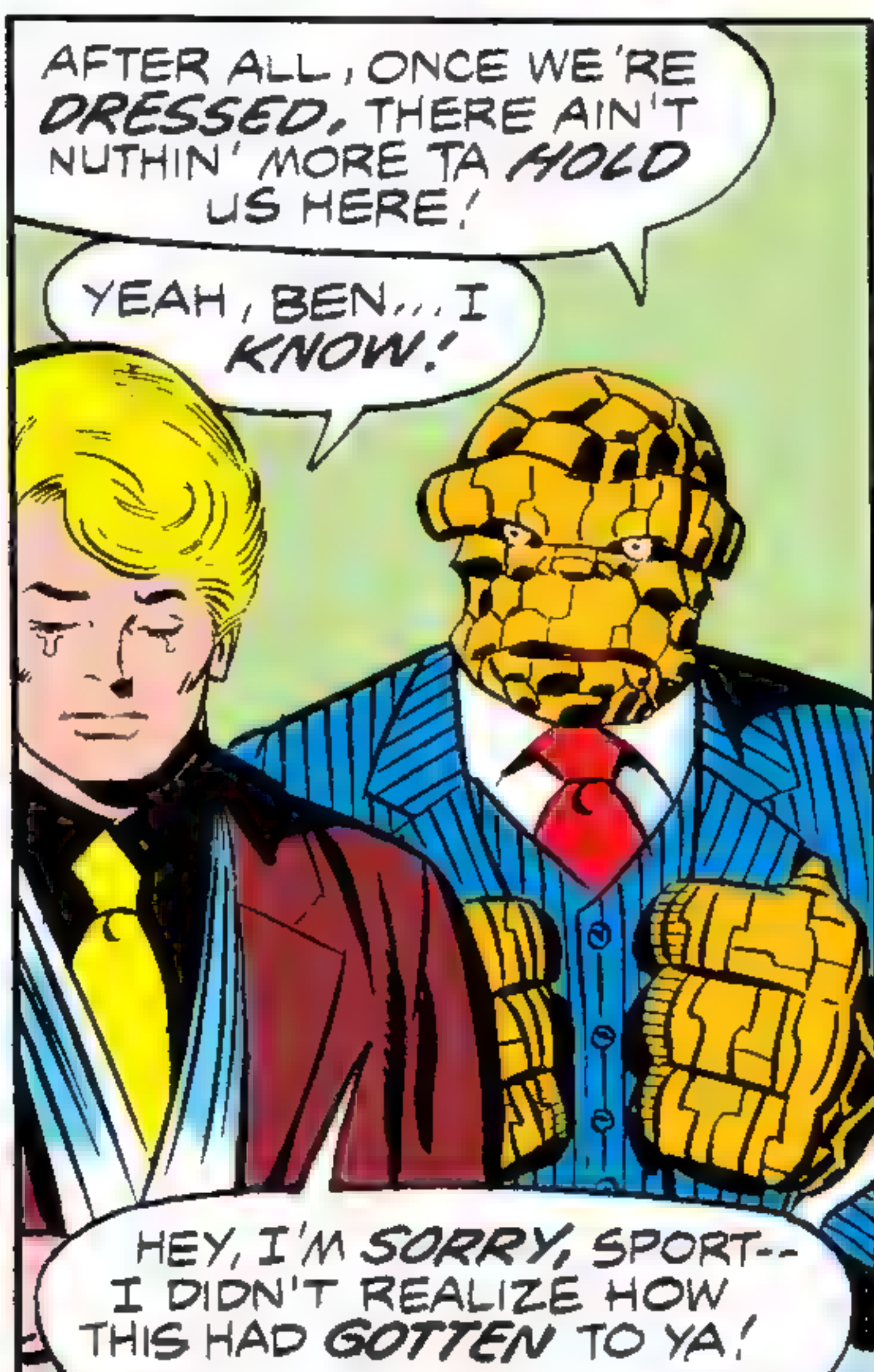
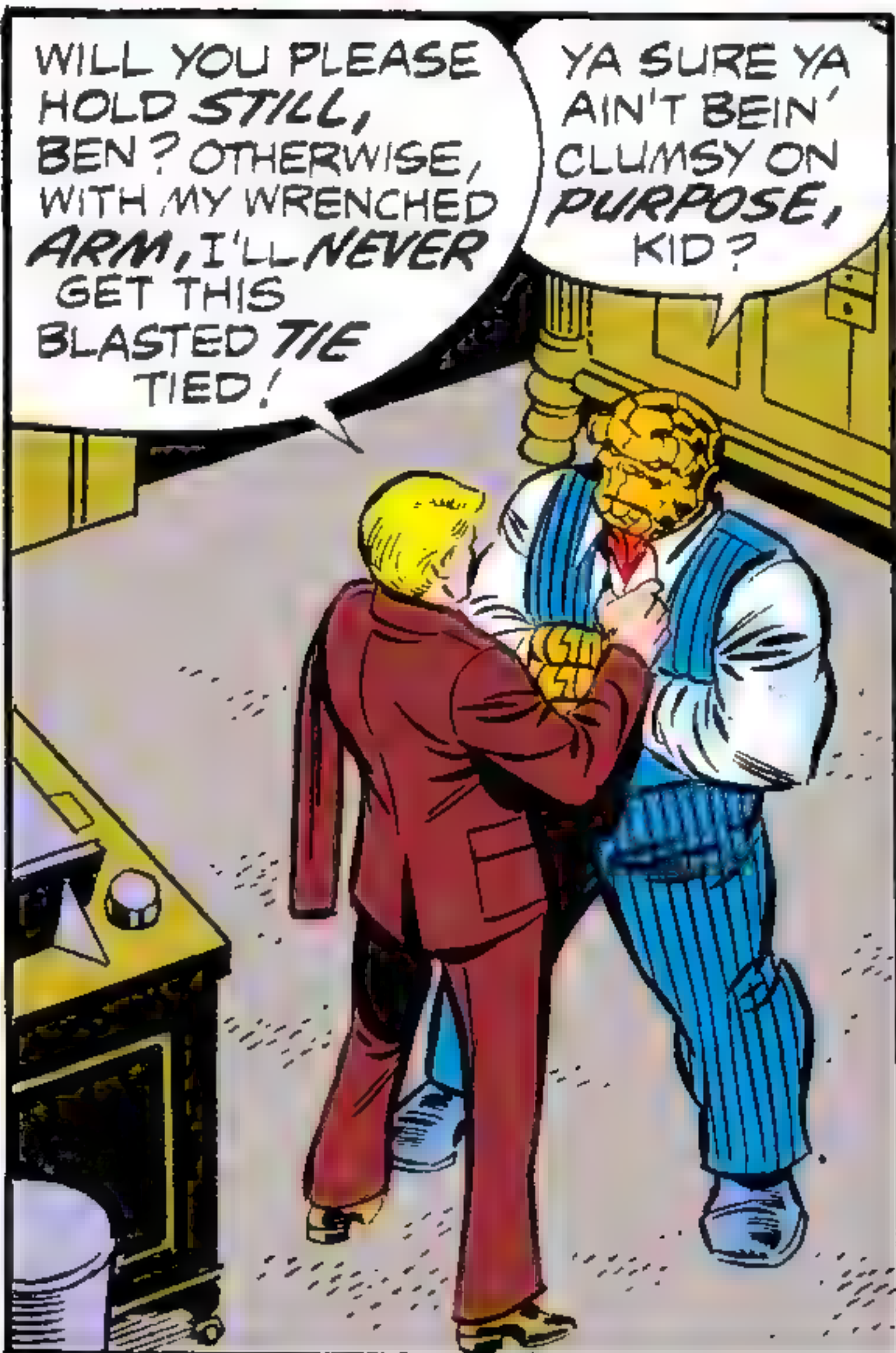
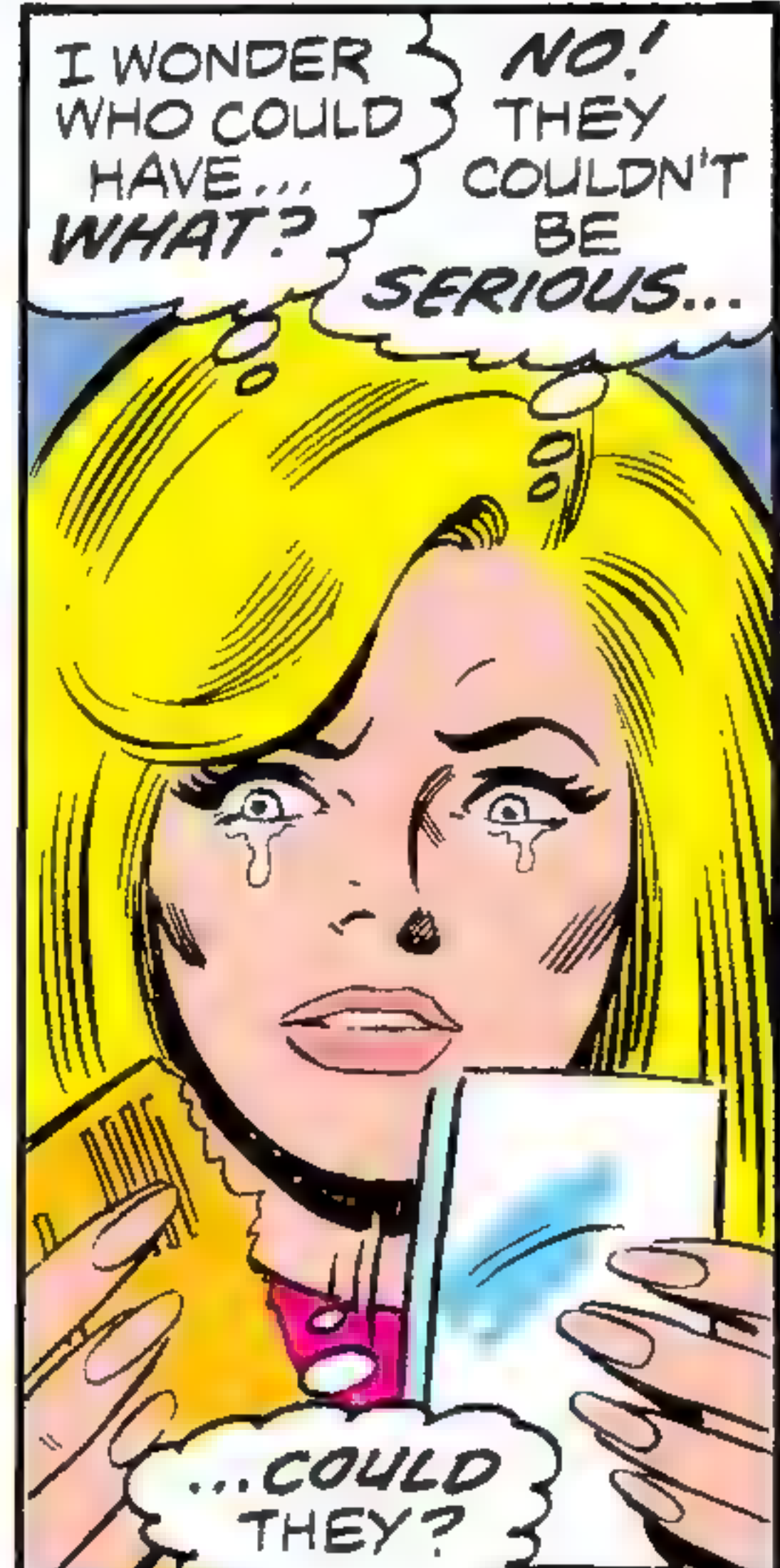
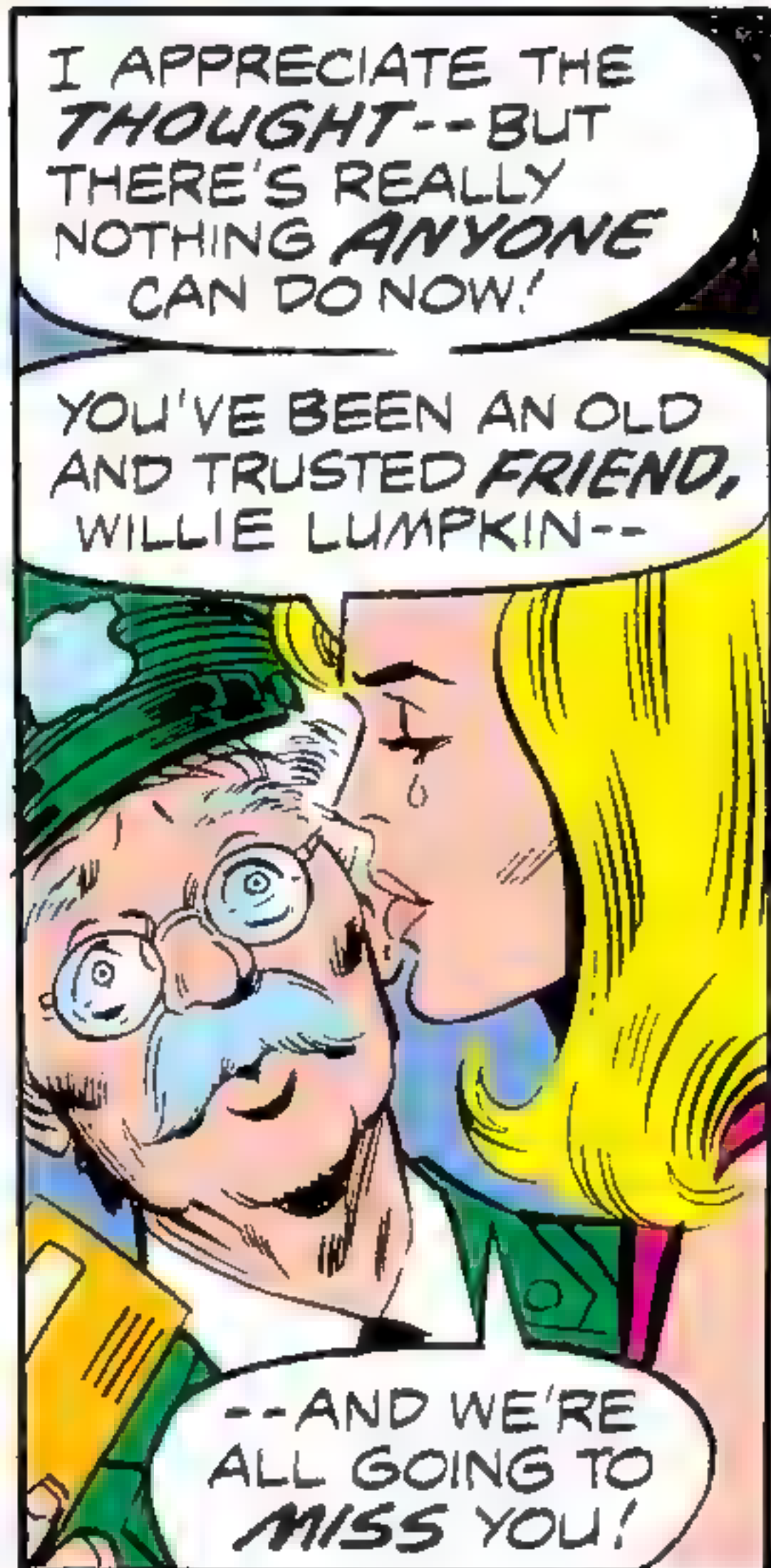
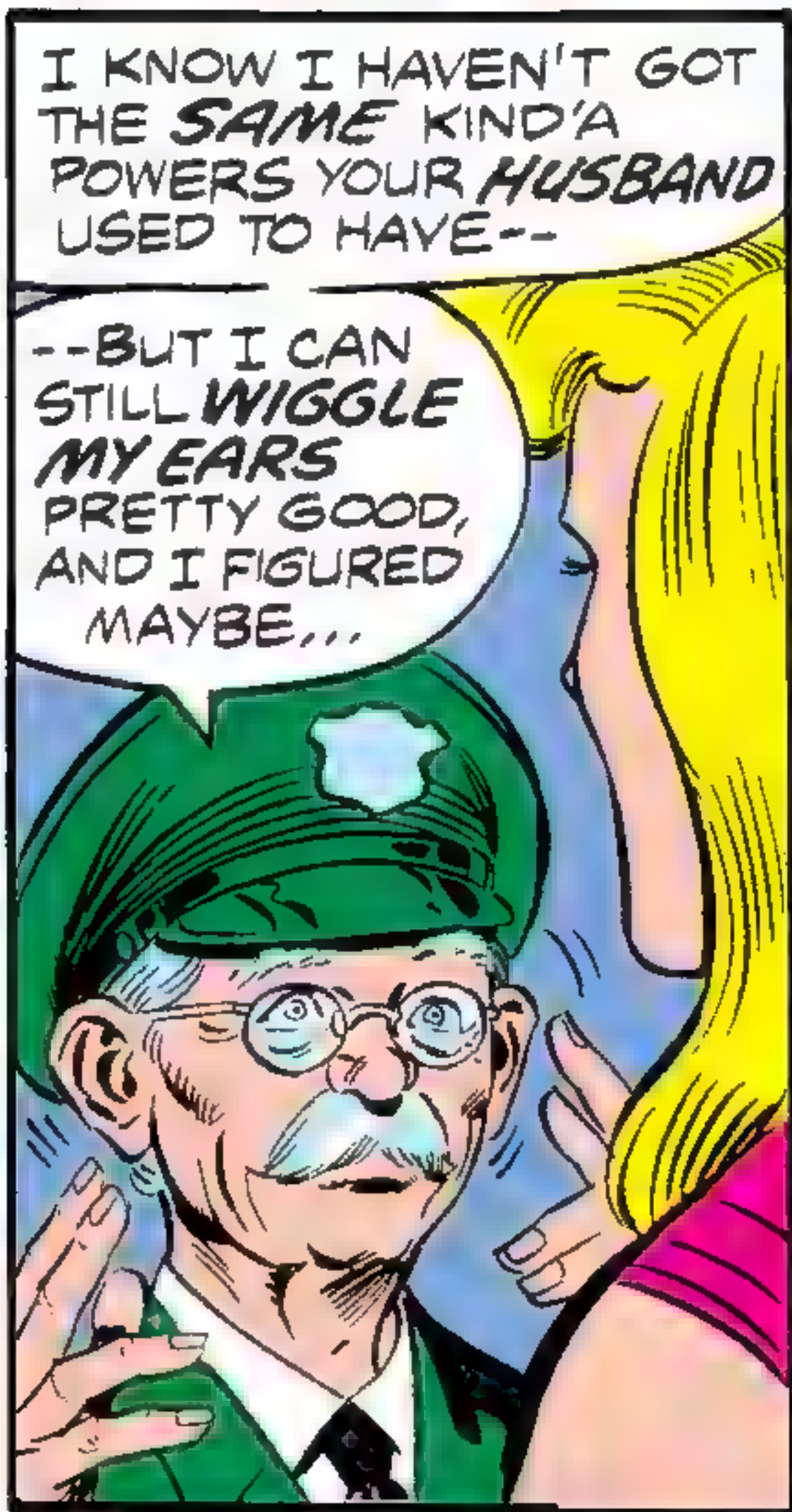
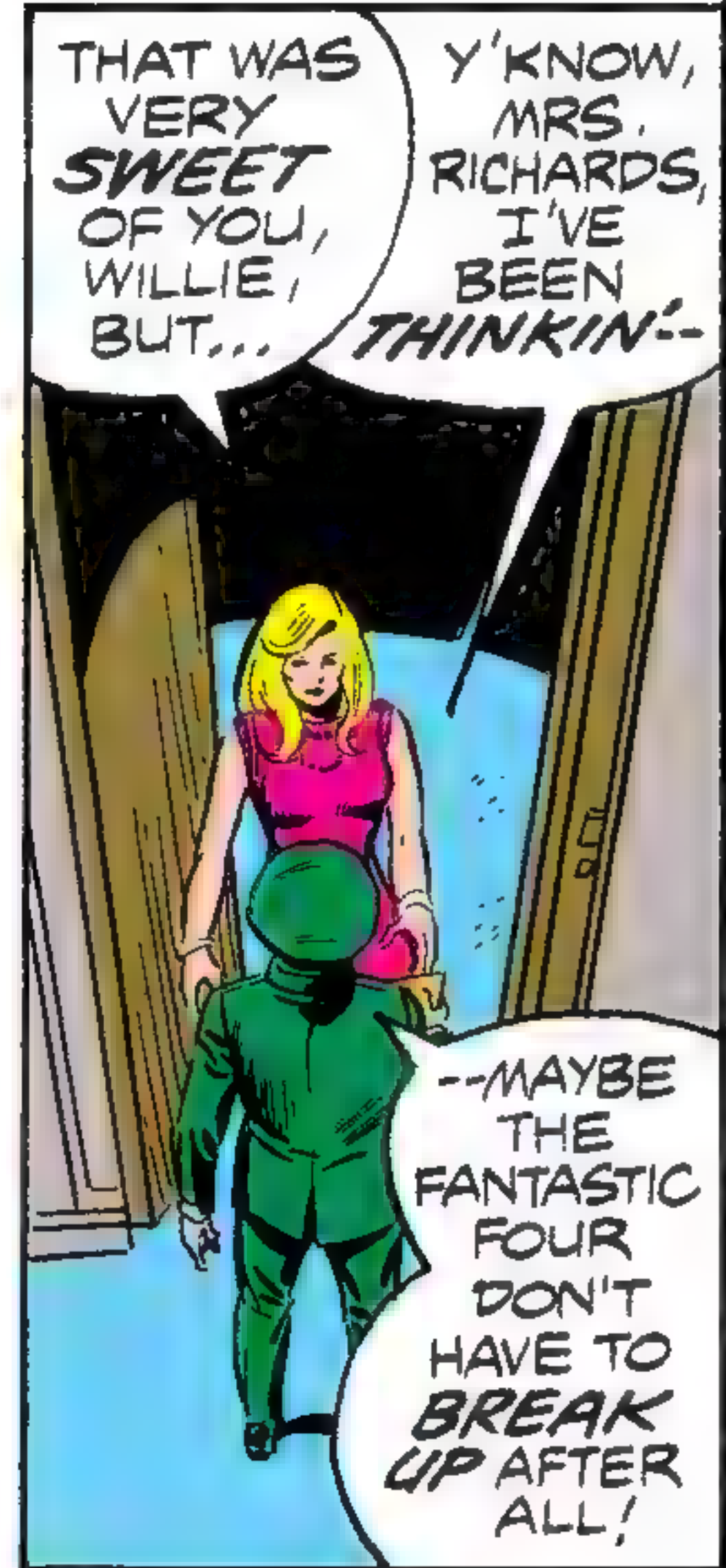
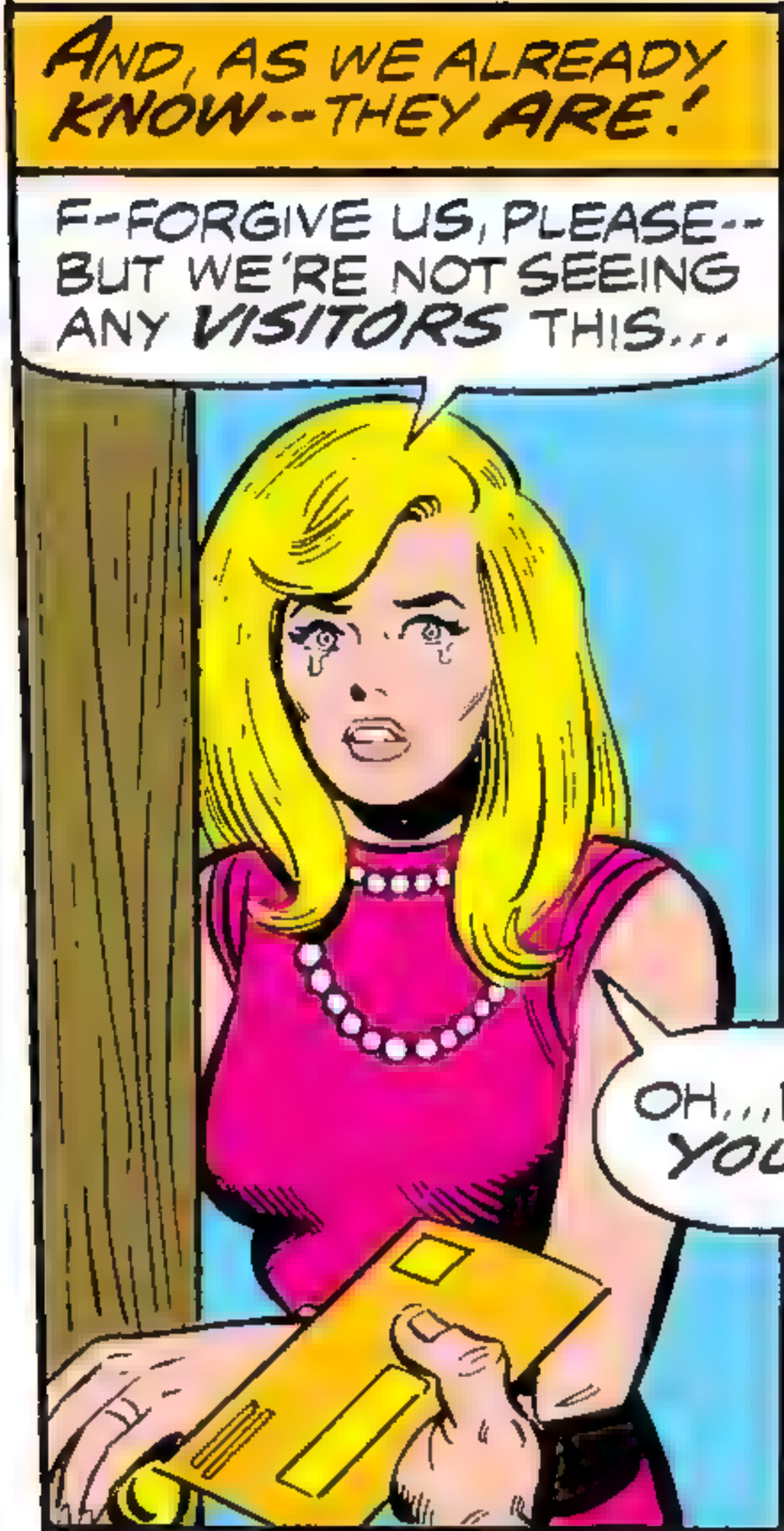
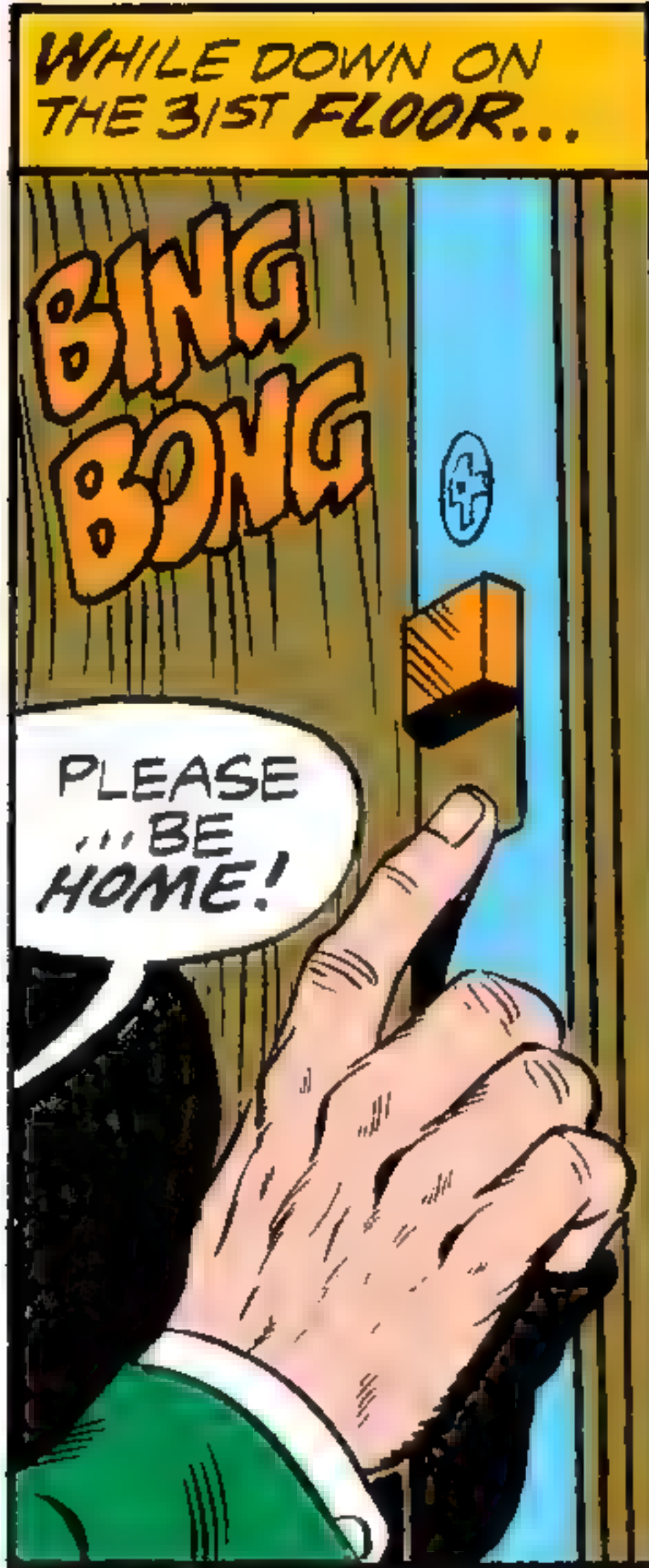


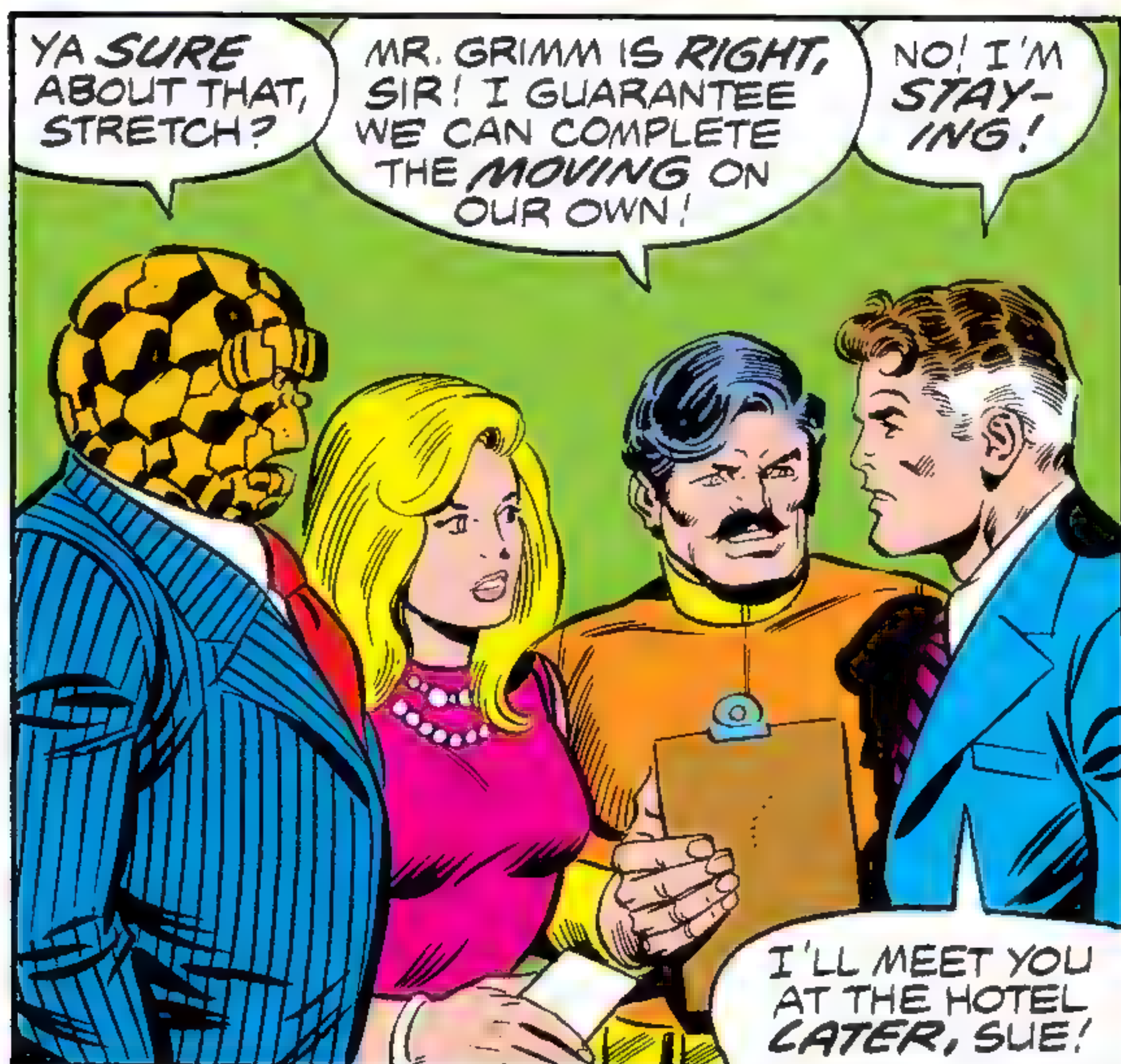
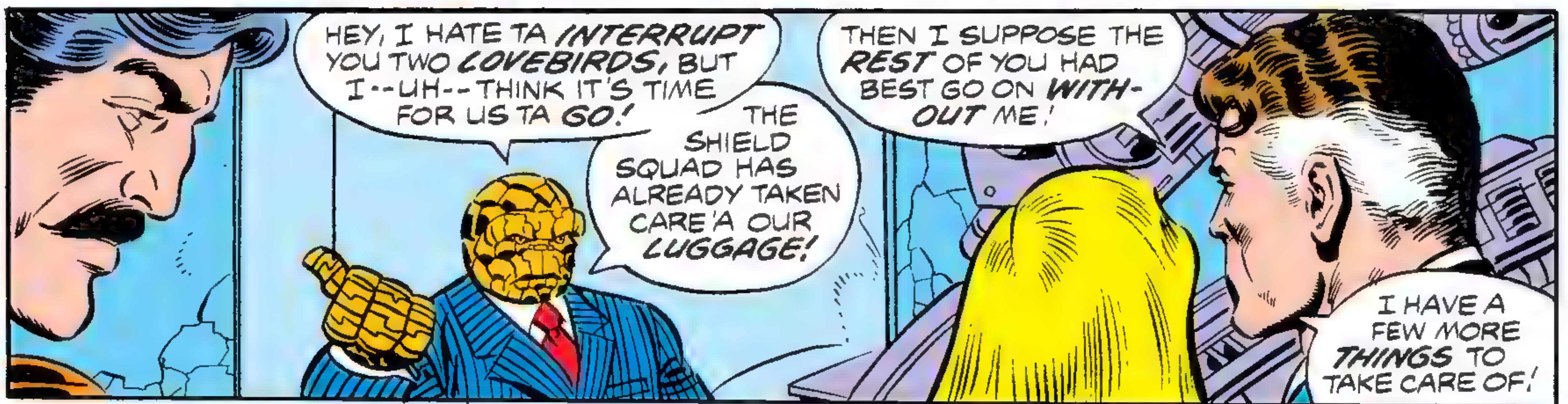
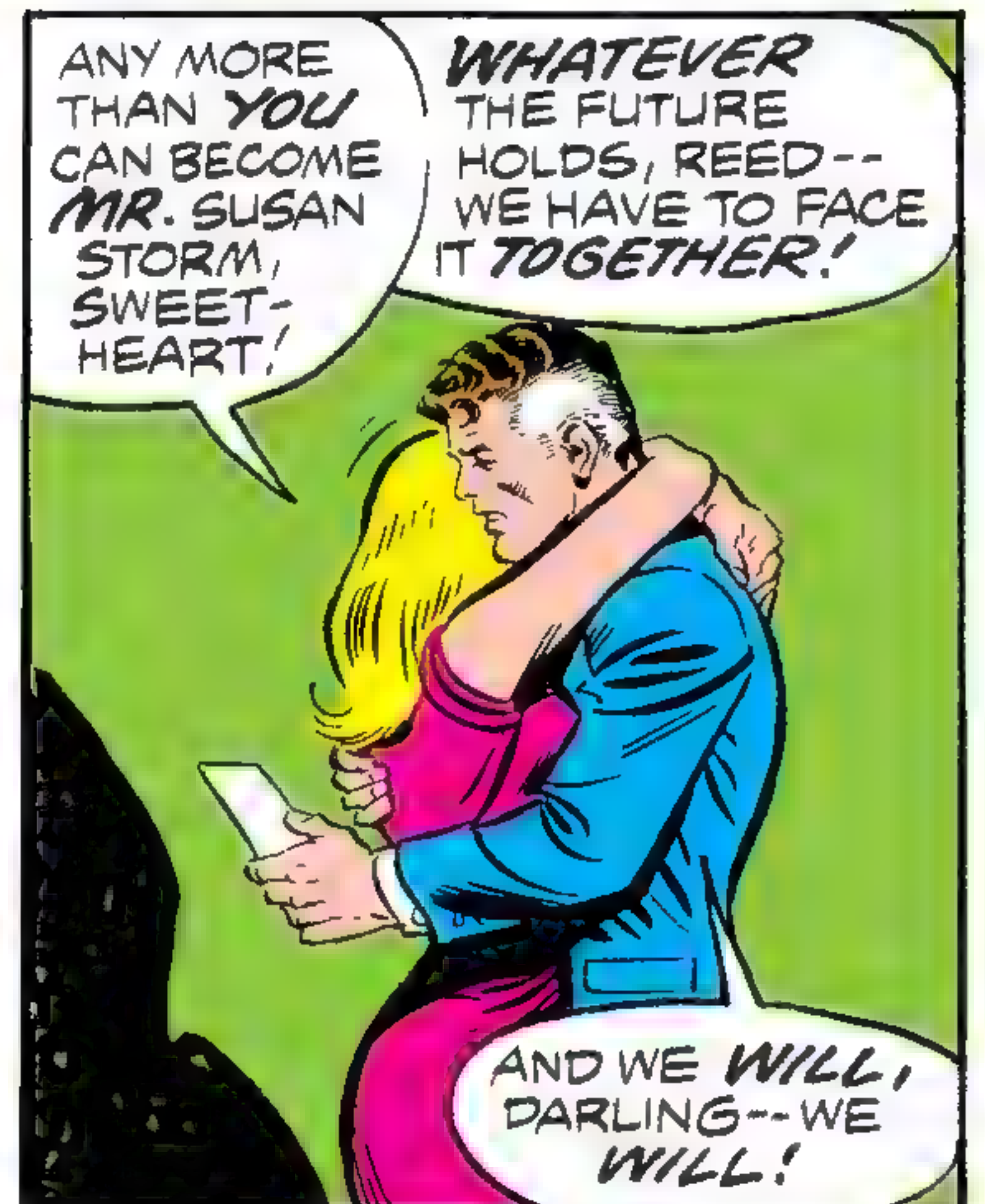
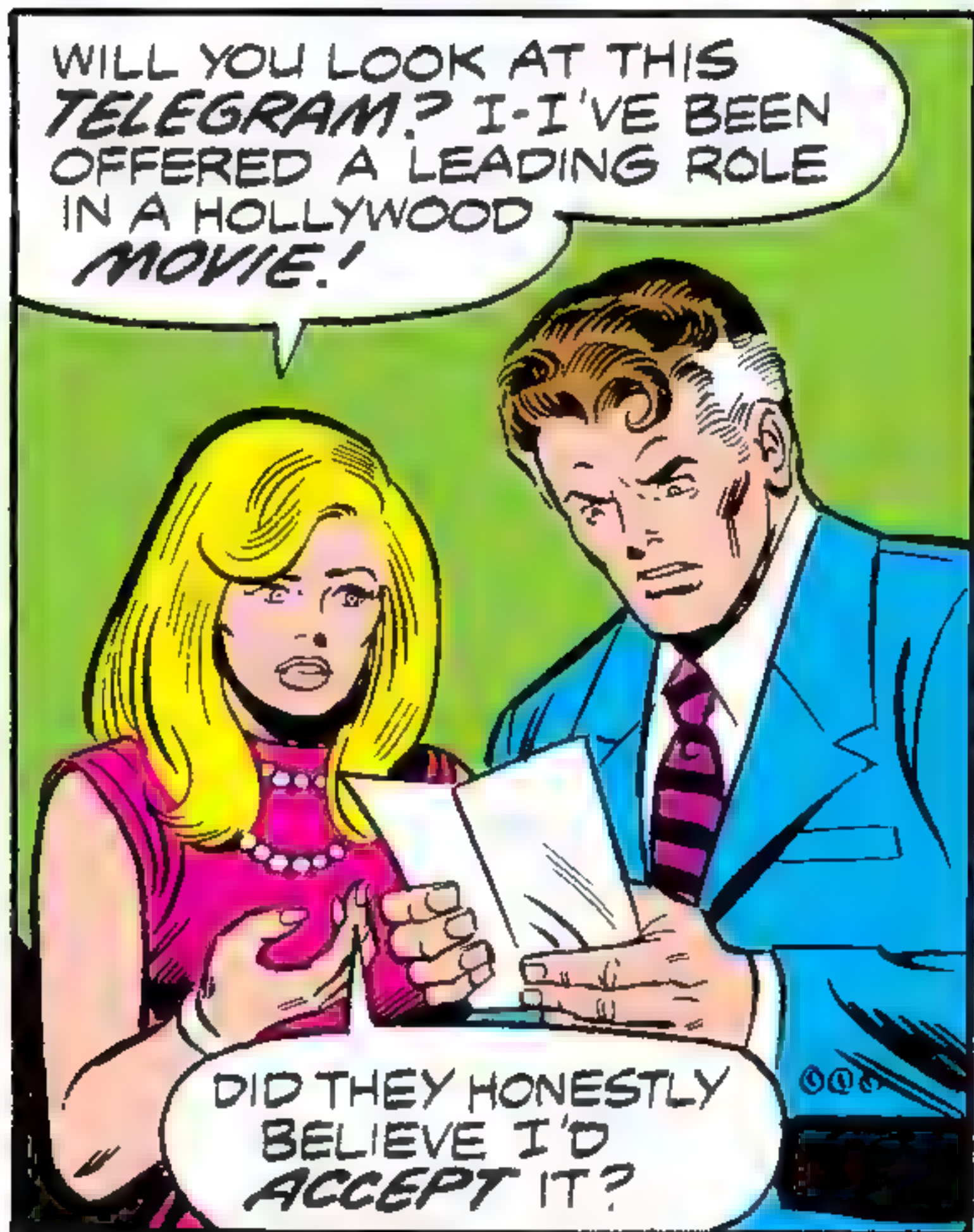
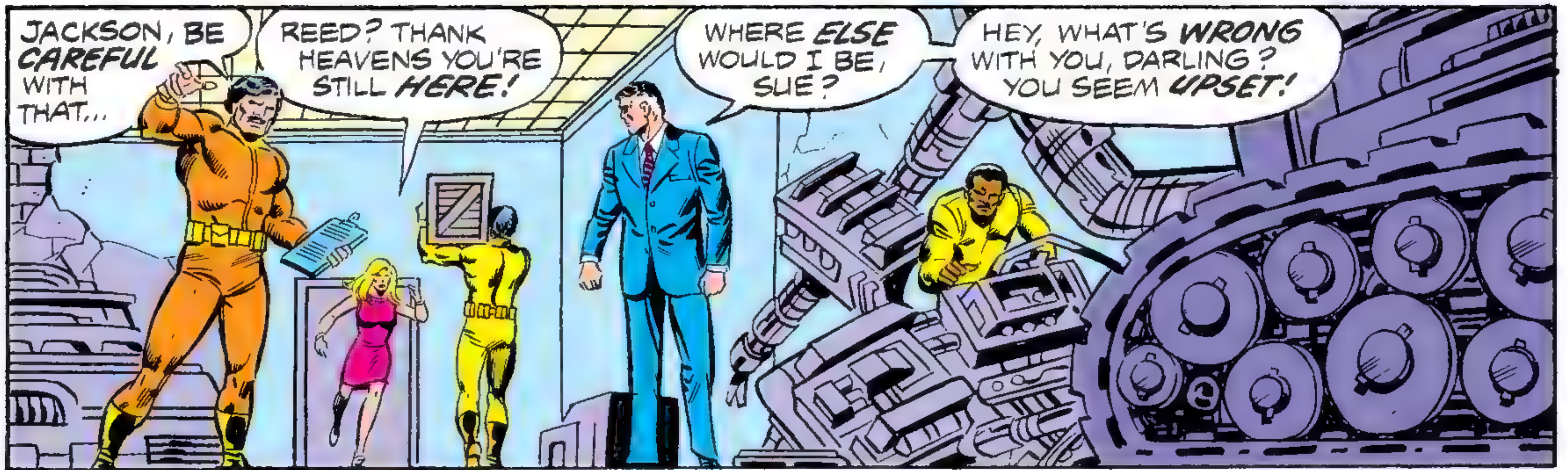
YA WANNA CALL YER LAWYERS, CALL 'EM--

--BUT IF YA DON'T GET OUTTA HERE NOW, COLLINS-- A NURSE WILL HAFTA DO THE DIALIN' FER YA!



I'M GOING! I'M GOING!!





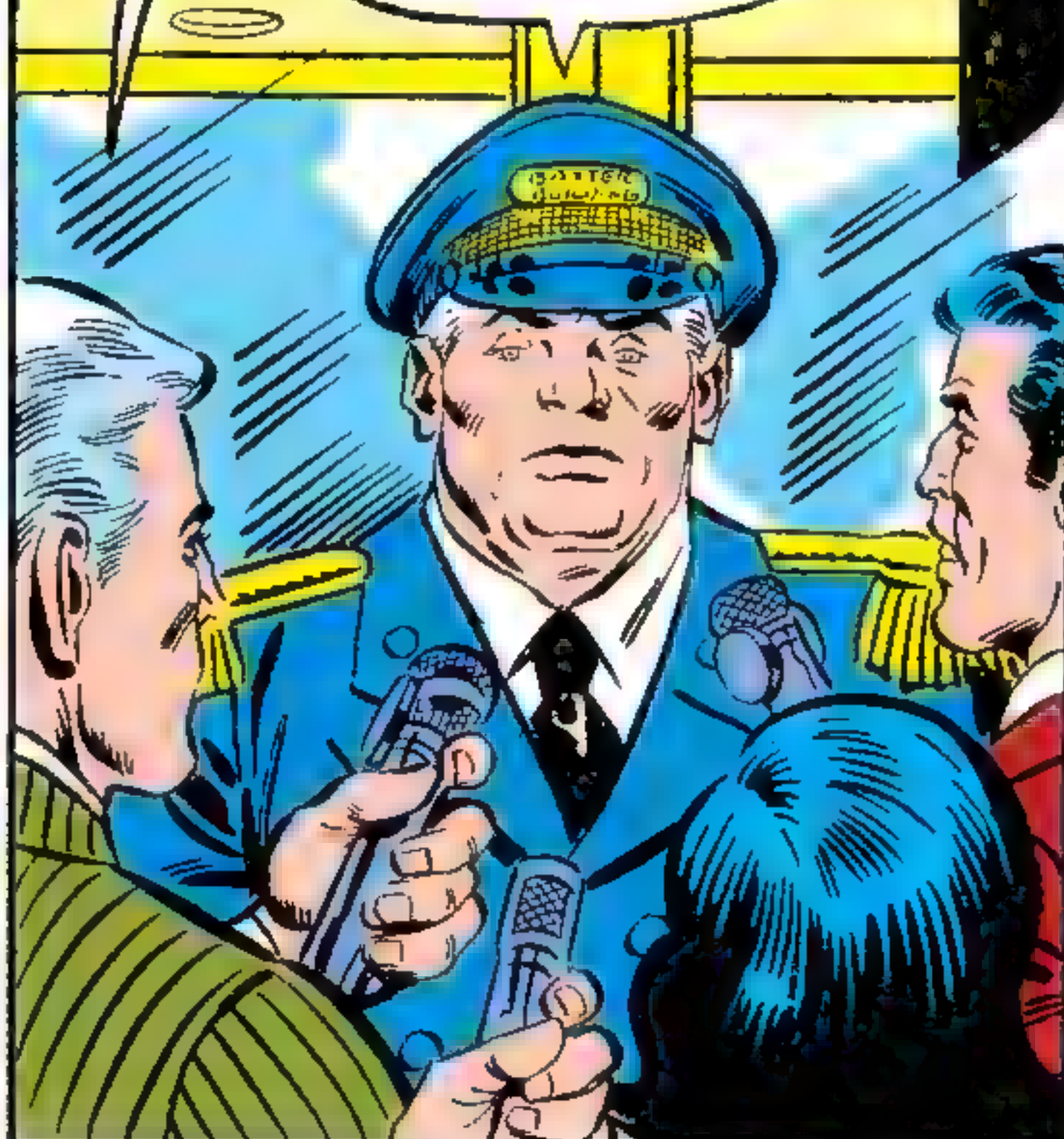
AS EXPECTED, THE PRESS HAS BEEN CAMPED ANXIOUSLY ON THE BAXTER BUILDING'S DOORSTEP SINCE THE NEWS FIRST **BROKE--**

--AND NOW, AFTER SEVERAL DAYS' **WAITING**, THEY'RE GROWING JUST A LITTLE BIT **DESPERATE!**



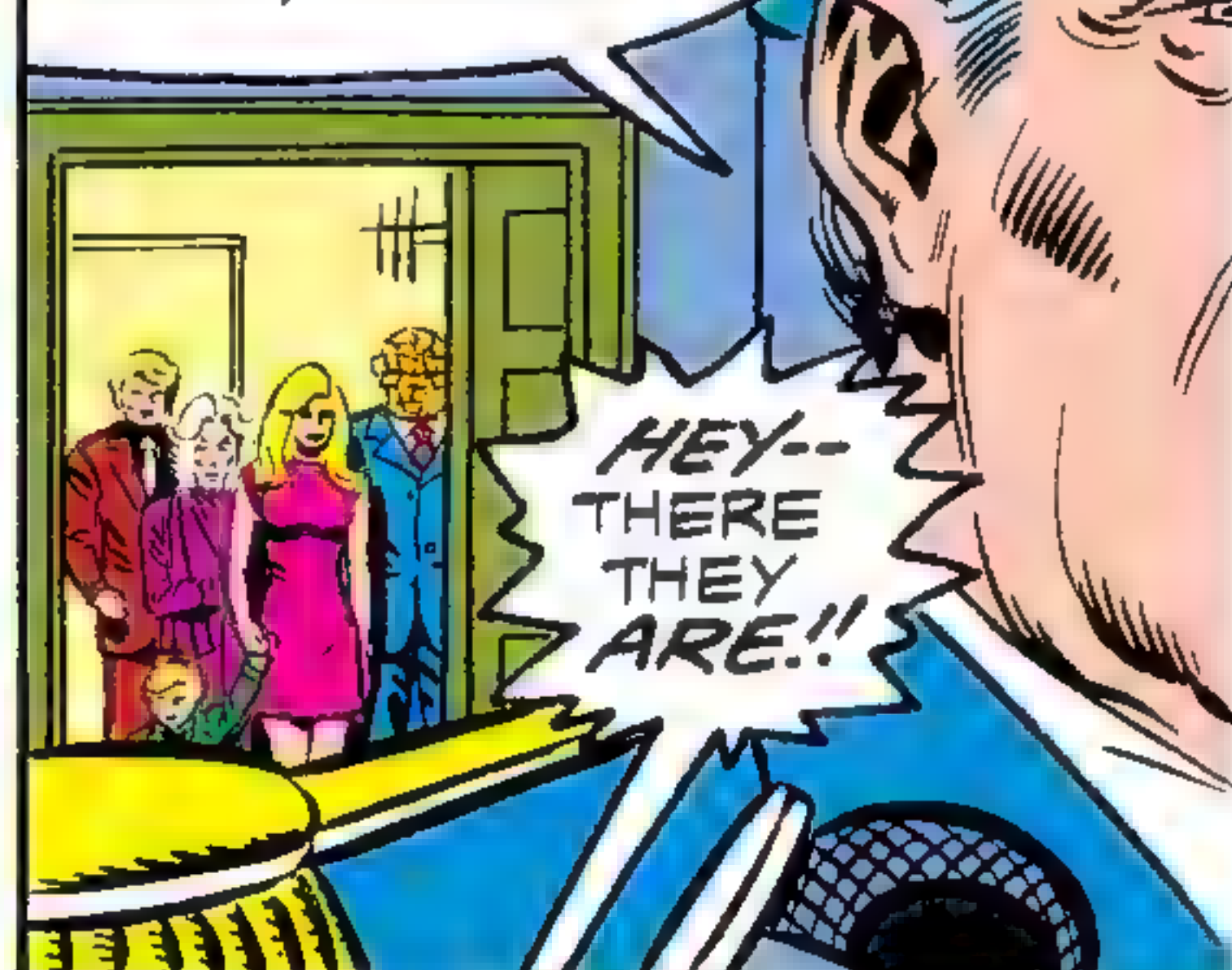
AND IN THAT TIME, HAVE YOU ACQUIRED ANY **INSIGHTS** INTO THE **LIVES** OF YOUR FOUR MOST FAMOUS **TENANTS?**

AYE, THAT I **HAVE!**



SEEIN' FOLKS **DAY-T'-DAY** AS I DO, THEY TEND T' TAKE ME INTO THEIR **CONFIDENCE!**

WELL, ONE DAY, WHEN THEY WAS FIGHTIN' **DR. DOOM** OR SOME SUCH RASCAL, THE HUMAN TORCH SAYS TO ME-- "O'HOOHIE," HE SAYS-- HE ALWAYS CALLS ME **O'HOOHIE--** WELL, HE SAYS...



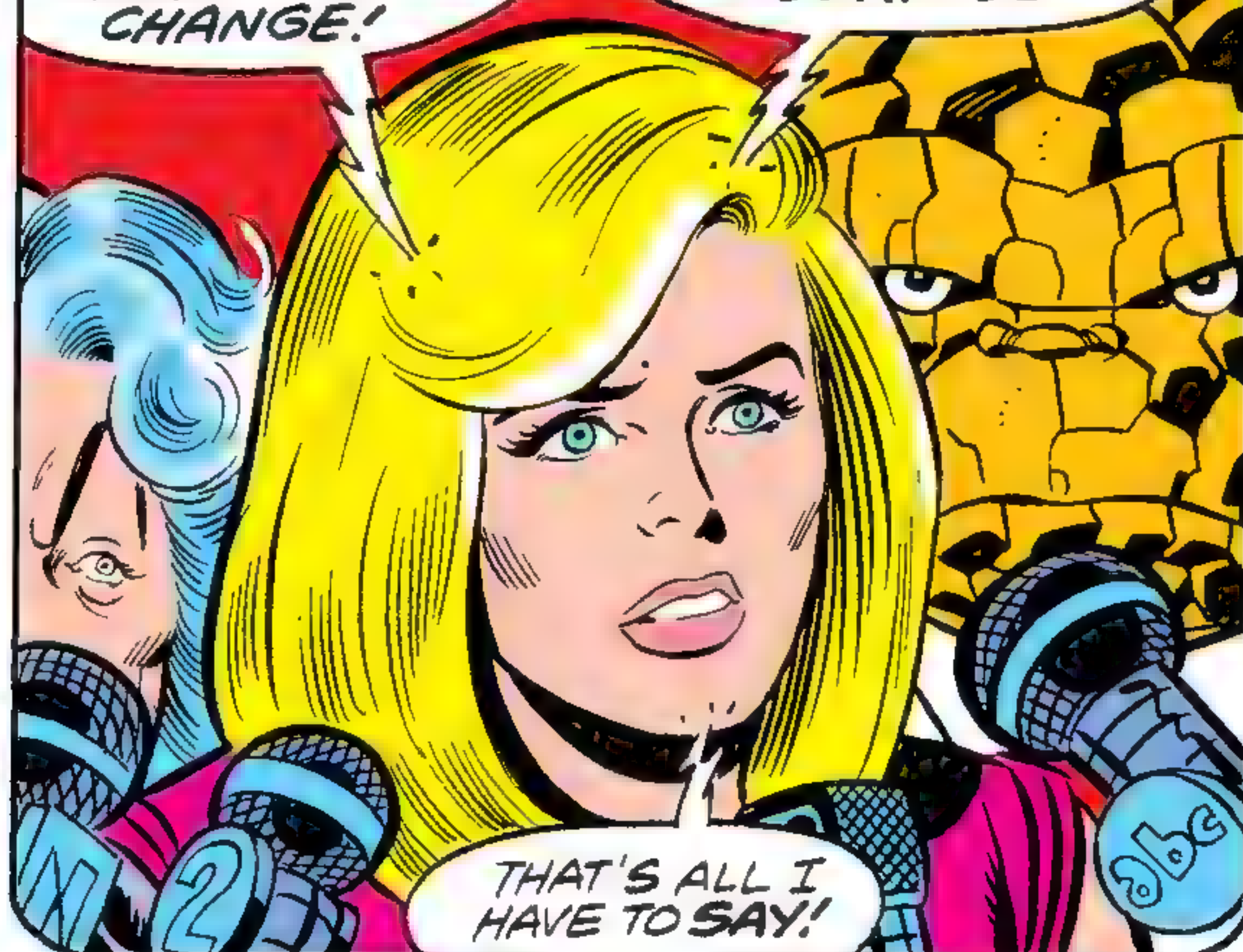
C'MON, OLD-TIMER --**OUTTA THE WAY!** YER STANDIN' IN FRONT'A MY **CAMERA!**

MR. STORM! MRS. RICHARDS! MR. GRIMM! DO YOU HAVE A FEW **WORDS** FOR THE PUBLIC TO **EXPLAIN** YOUR DECISION TO **DISBAND?**



I'M AFRAID THERE'S REALLY NOTHING TO **EXPLAIN!** WE'RE ALL **HUMAN--** WE GROW-- WE **CHANGE!**

IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS FINALLY **COME** FOR US ALL TO SEEK OUR SEPARATE **DESTINIES!**

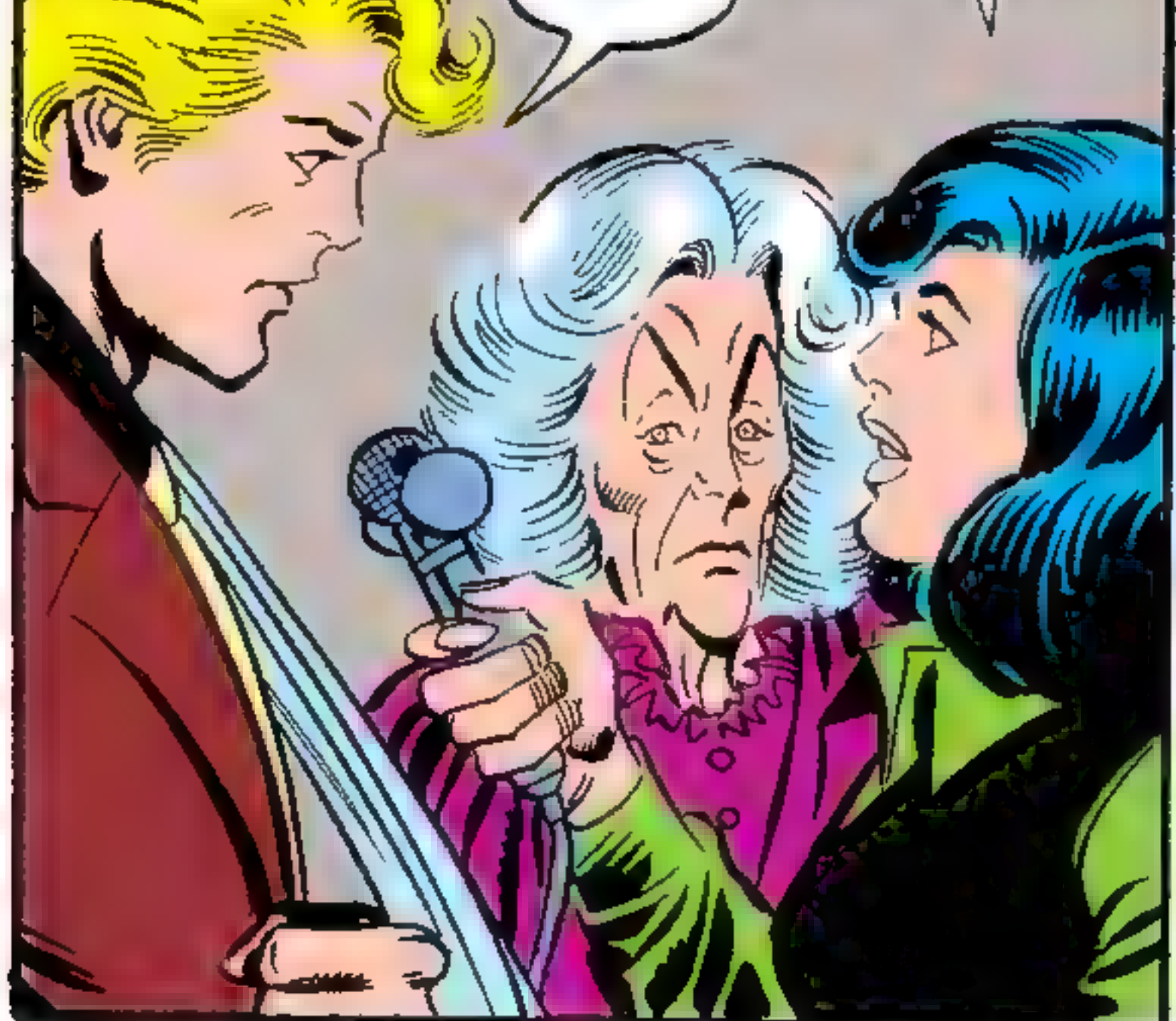


AND HOW ABOUT **YOU**, MR. STORM? DOES THE FAMOUS **HUMAN TORCH** HAVE ANY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

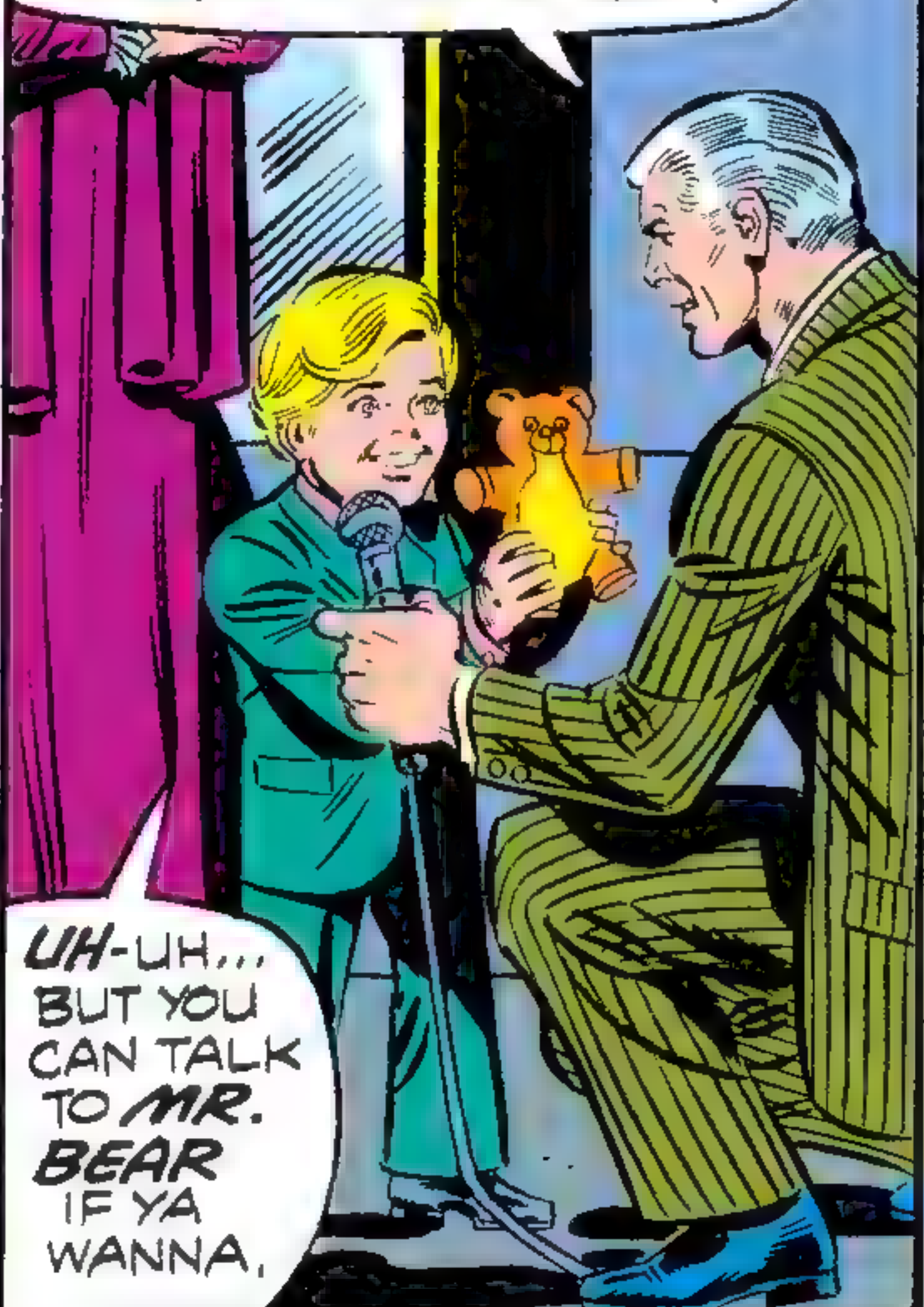
YES.

THEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO **TELL** US ABOUT THEM?

NO.



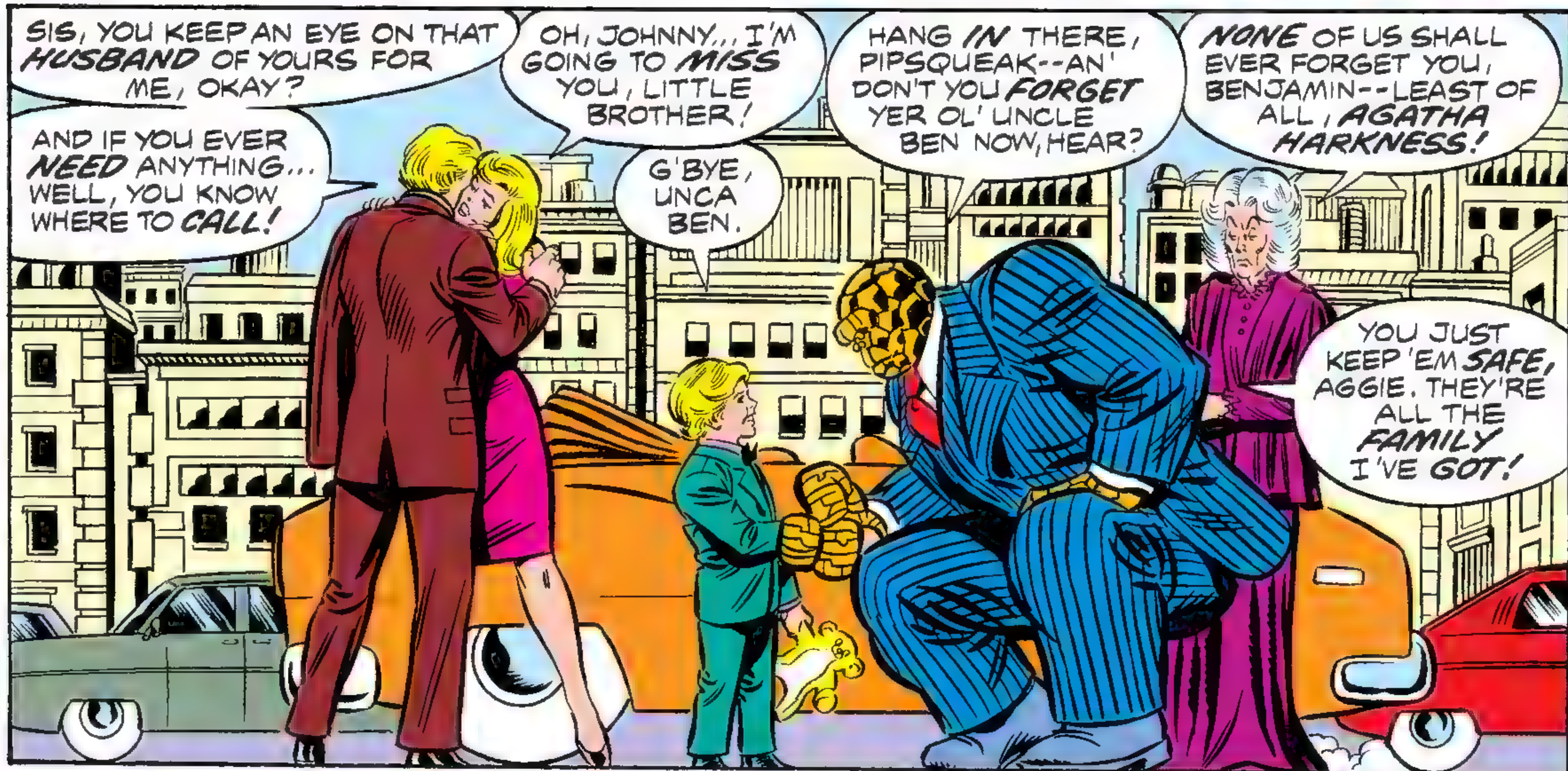
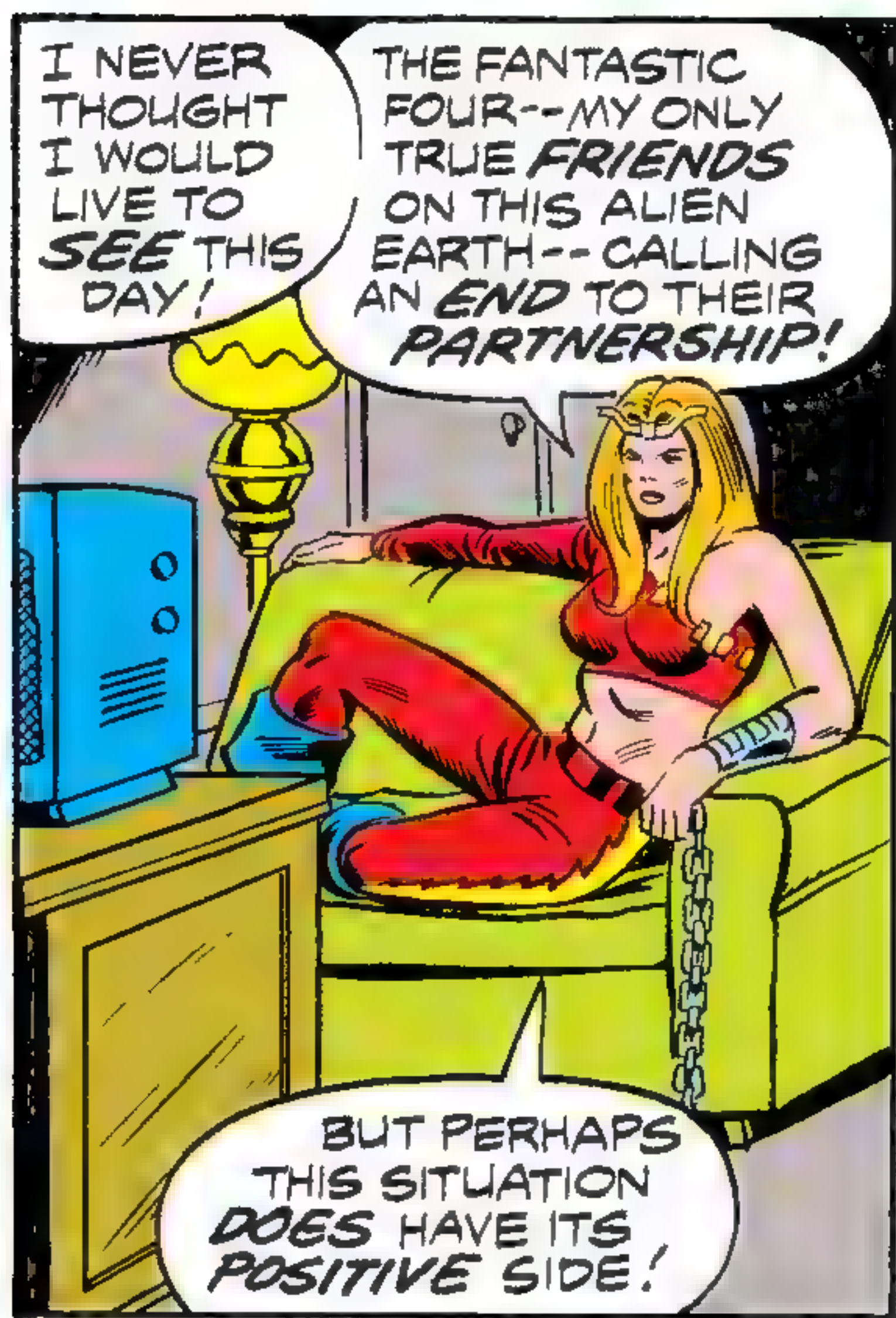
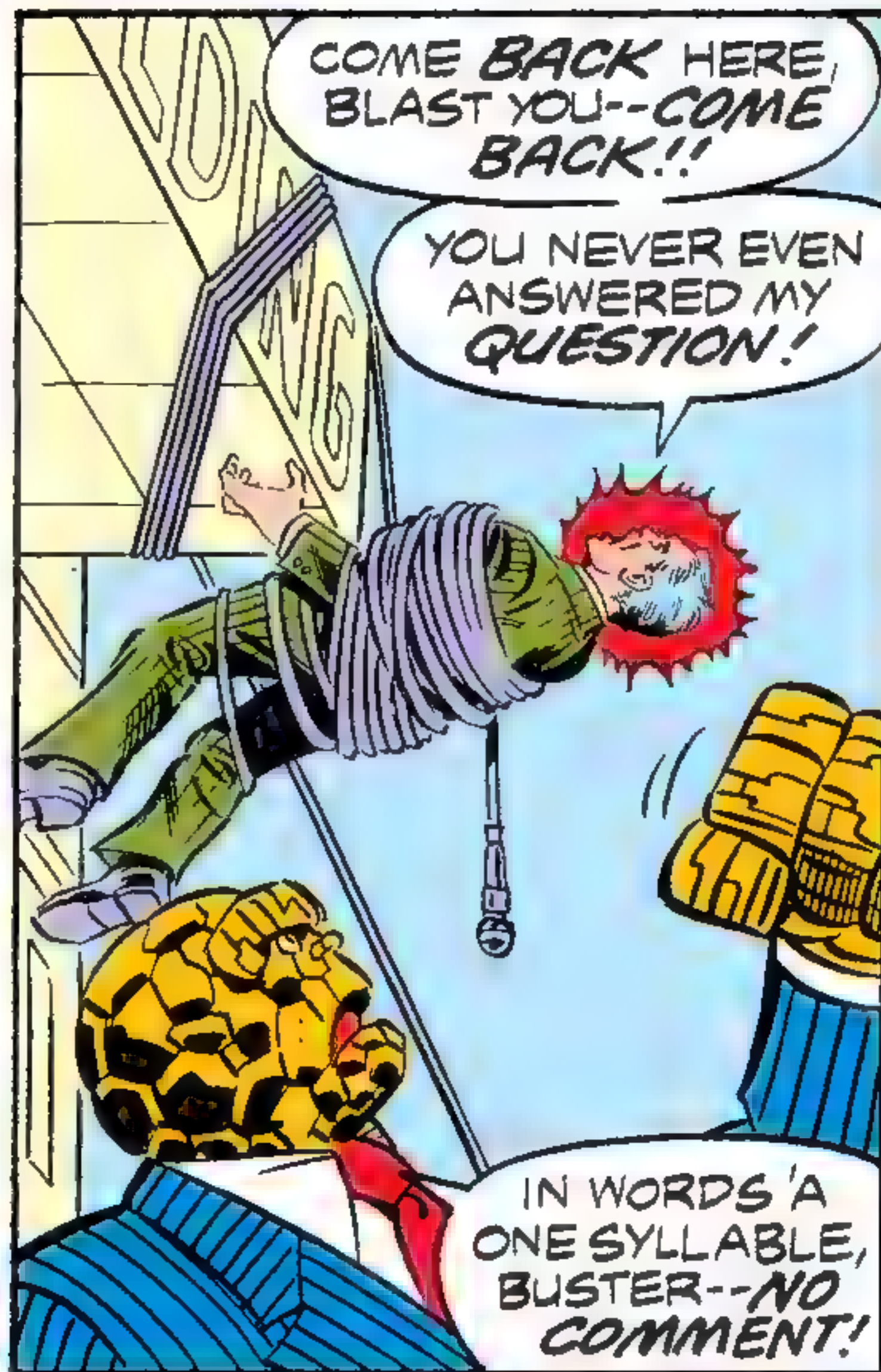
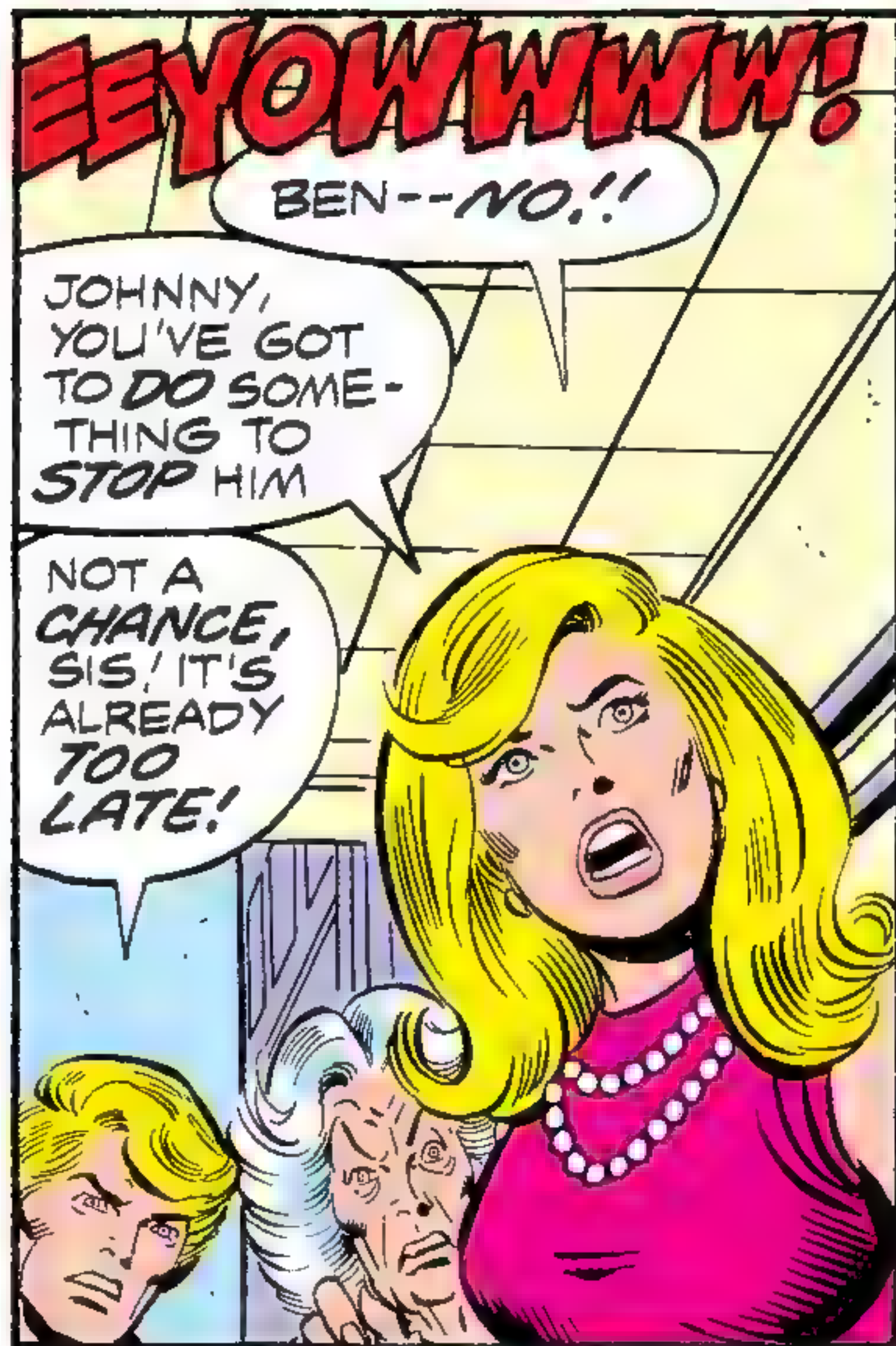
AND **YOU**, SON--DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?

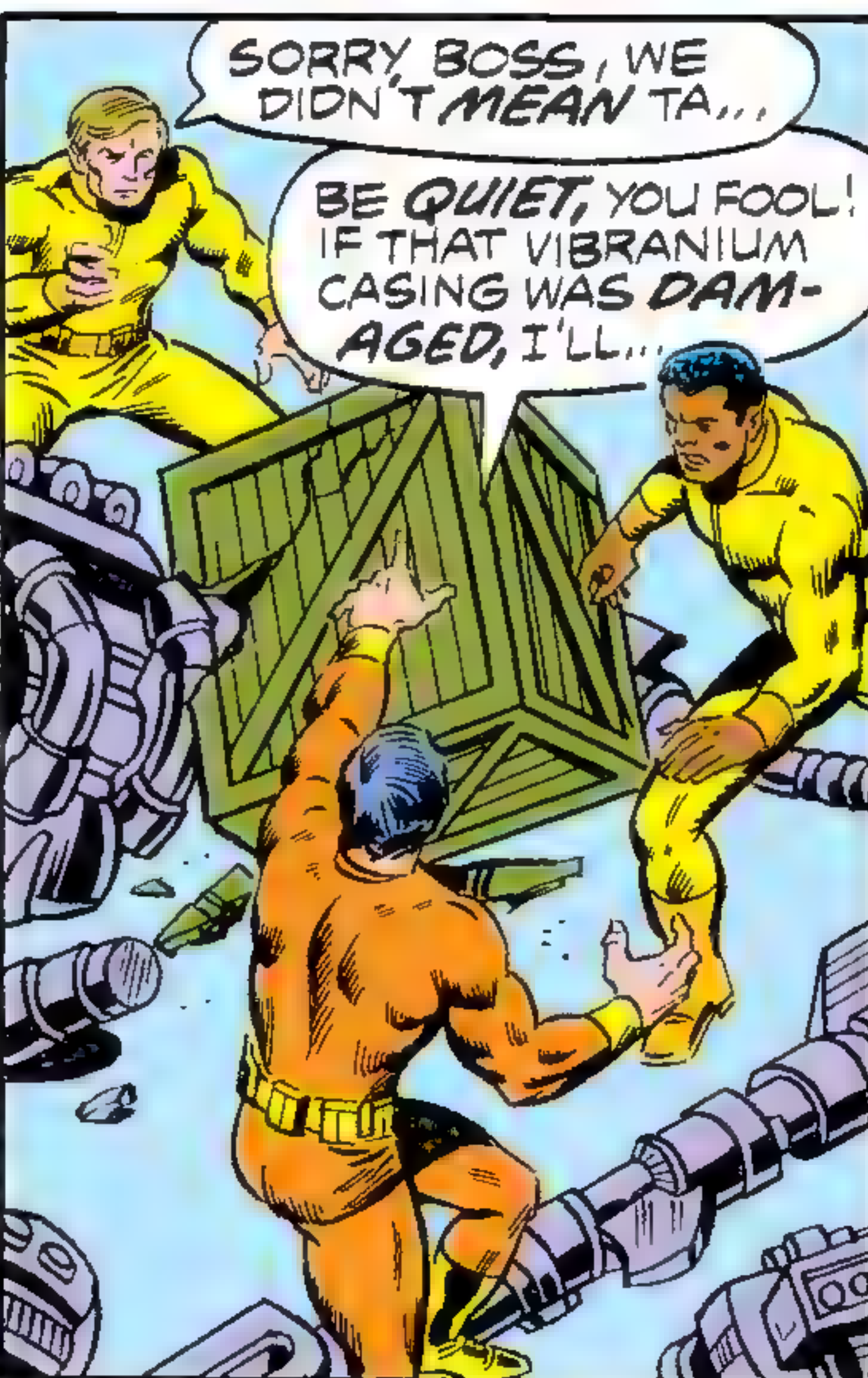
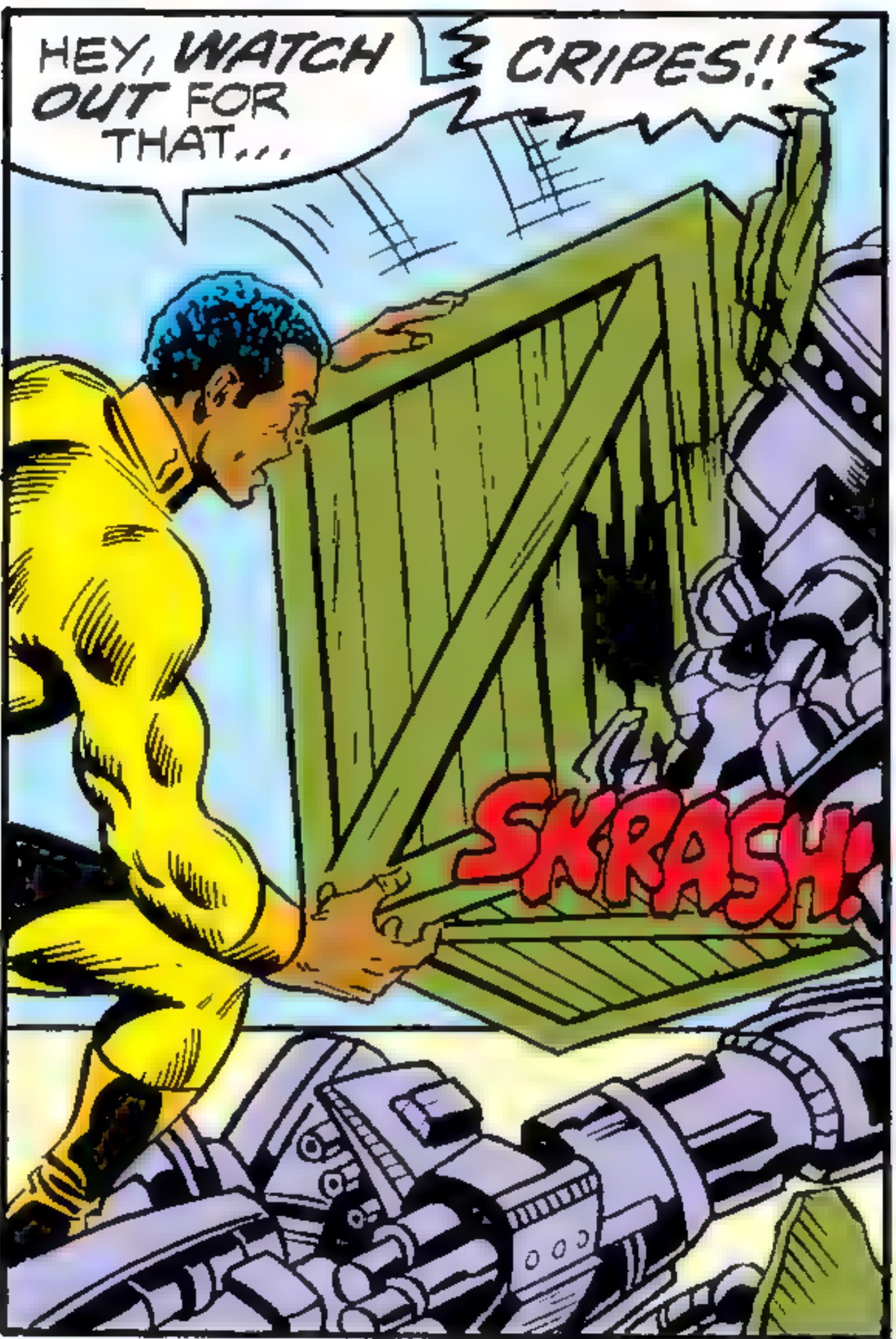
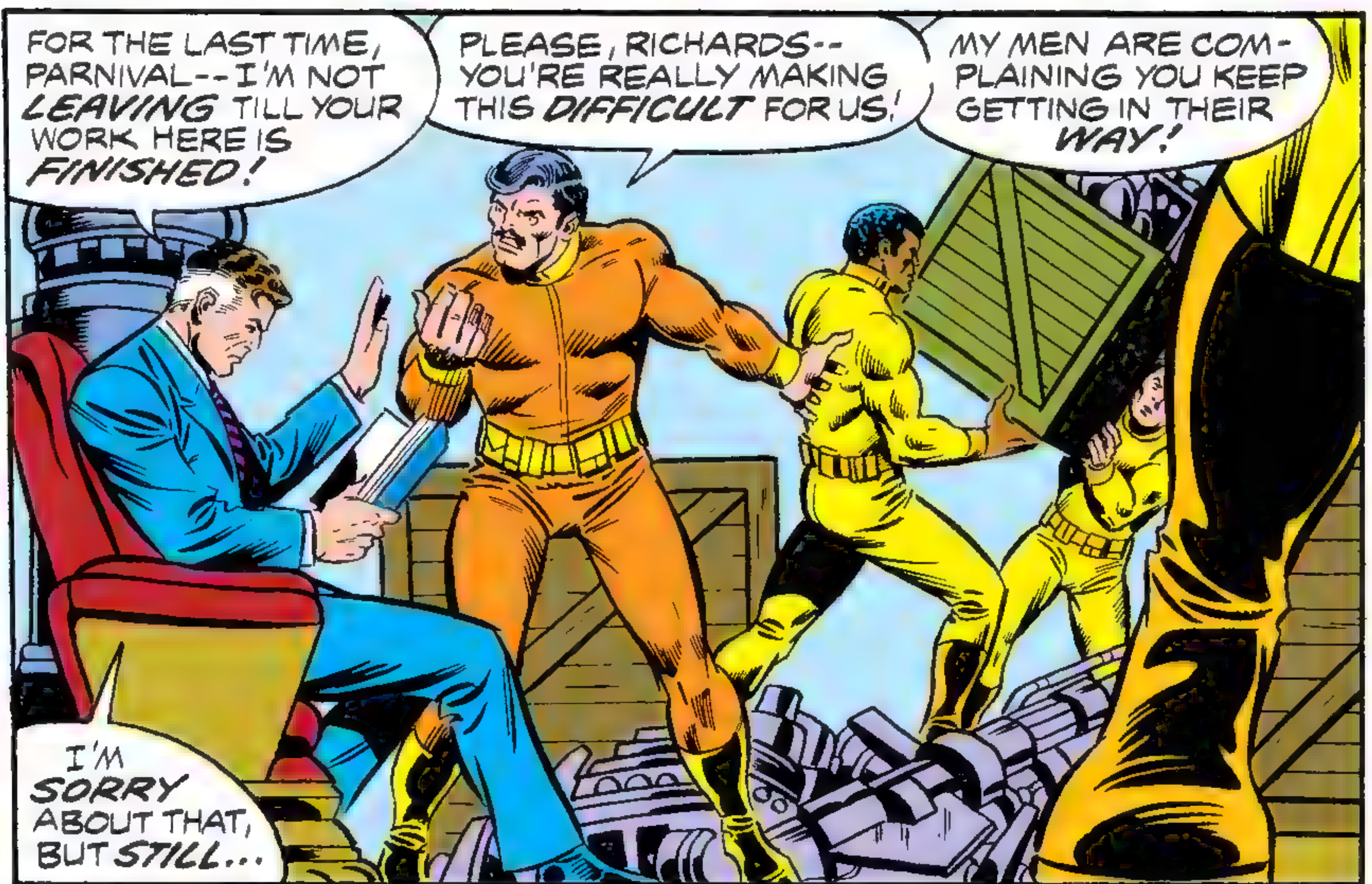
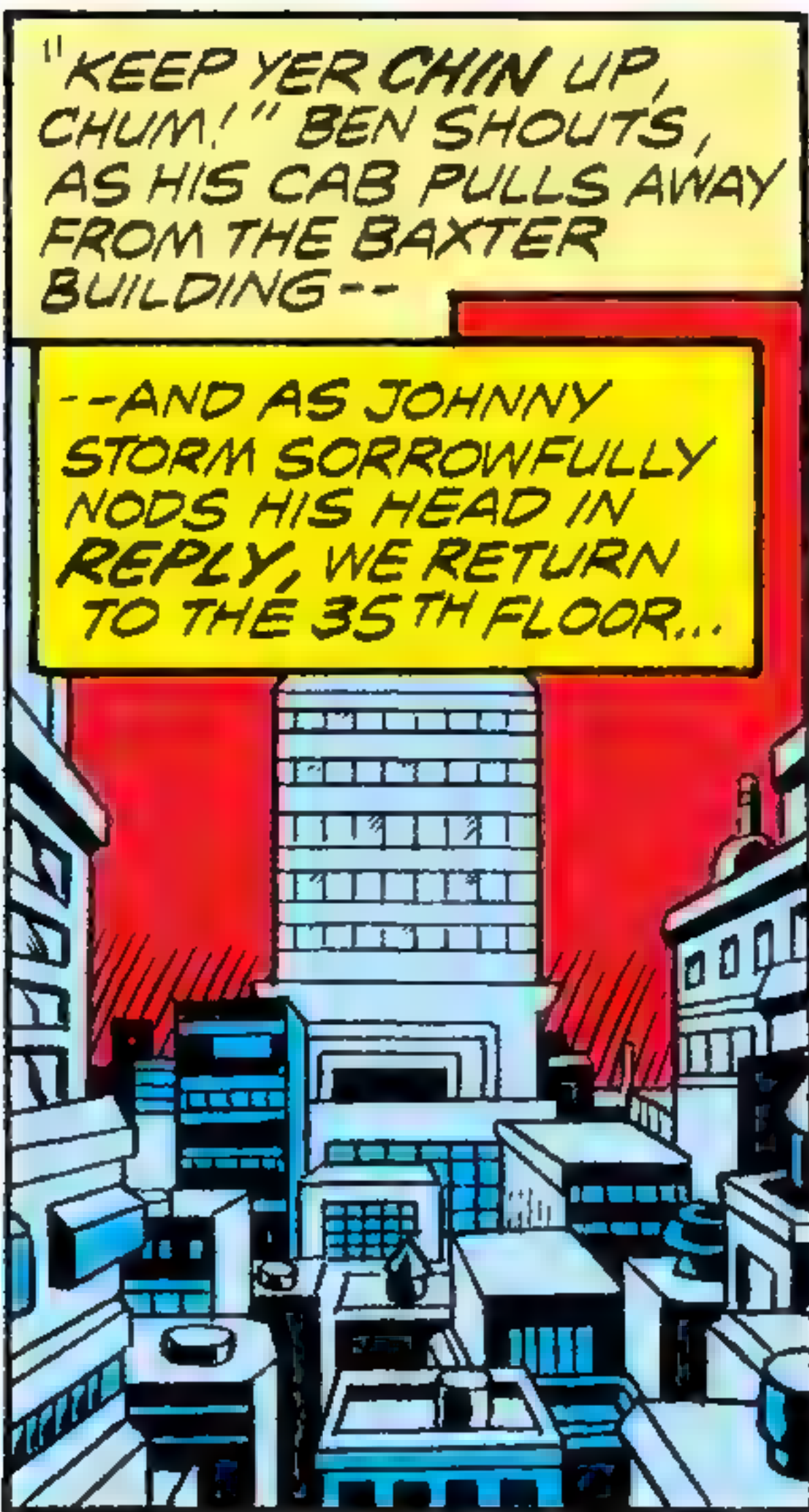
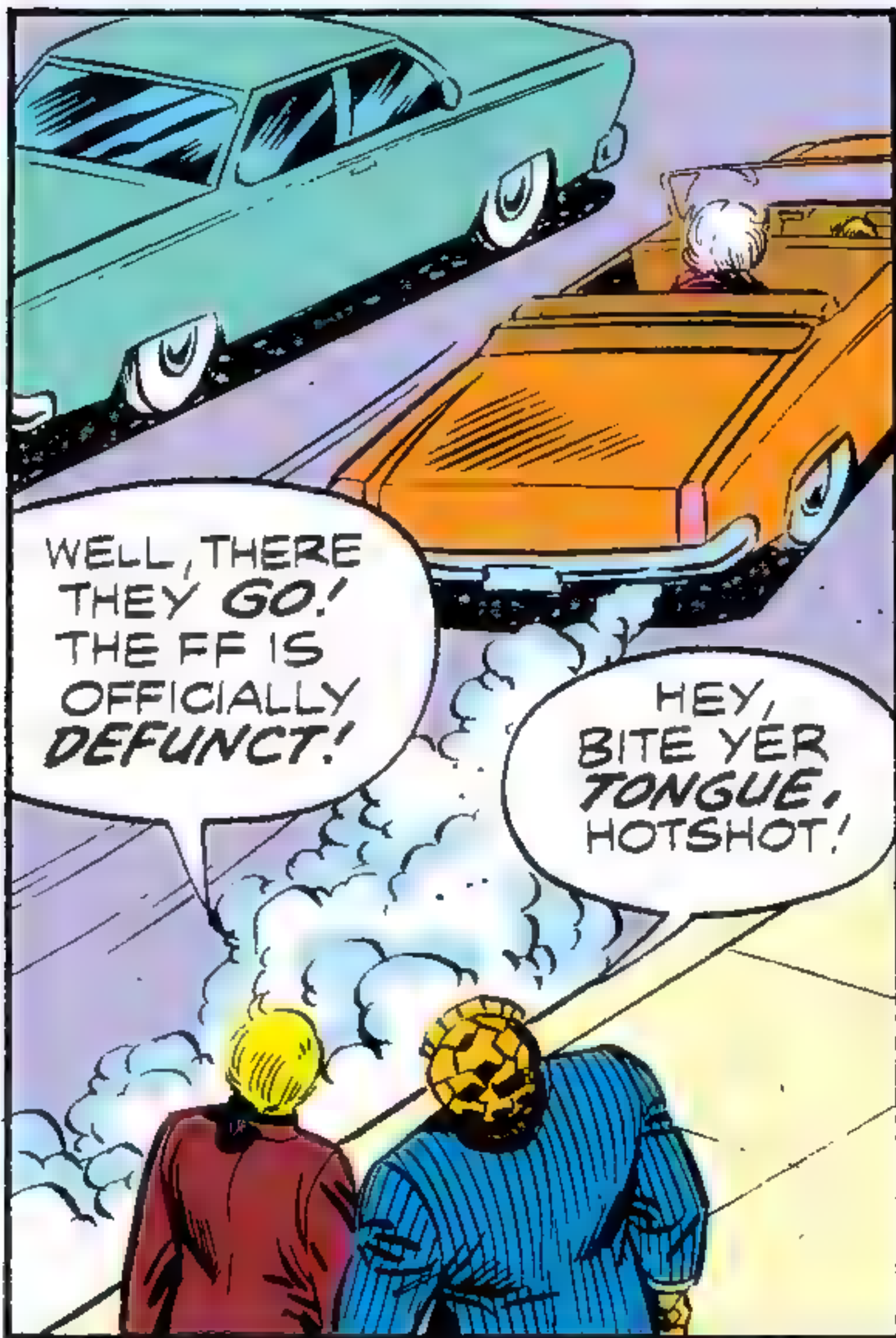


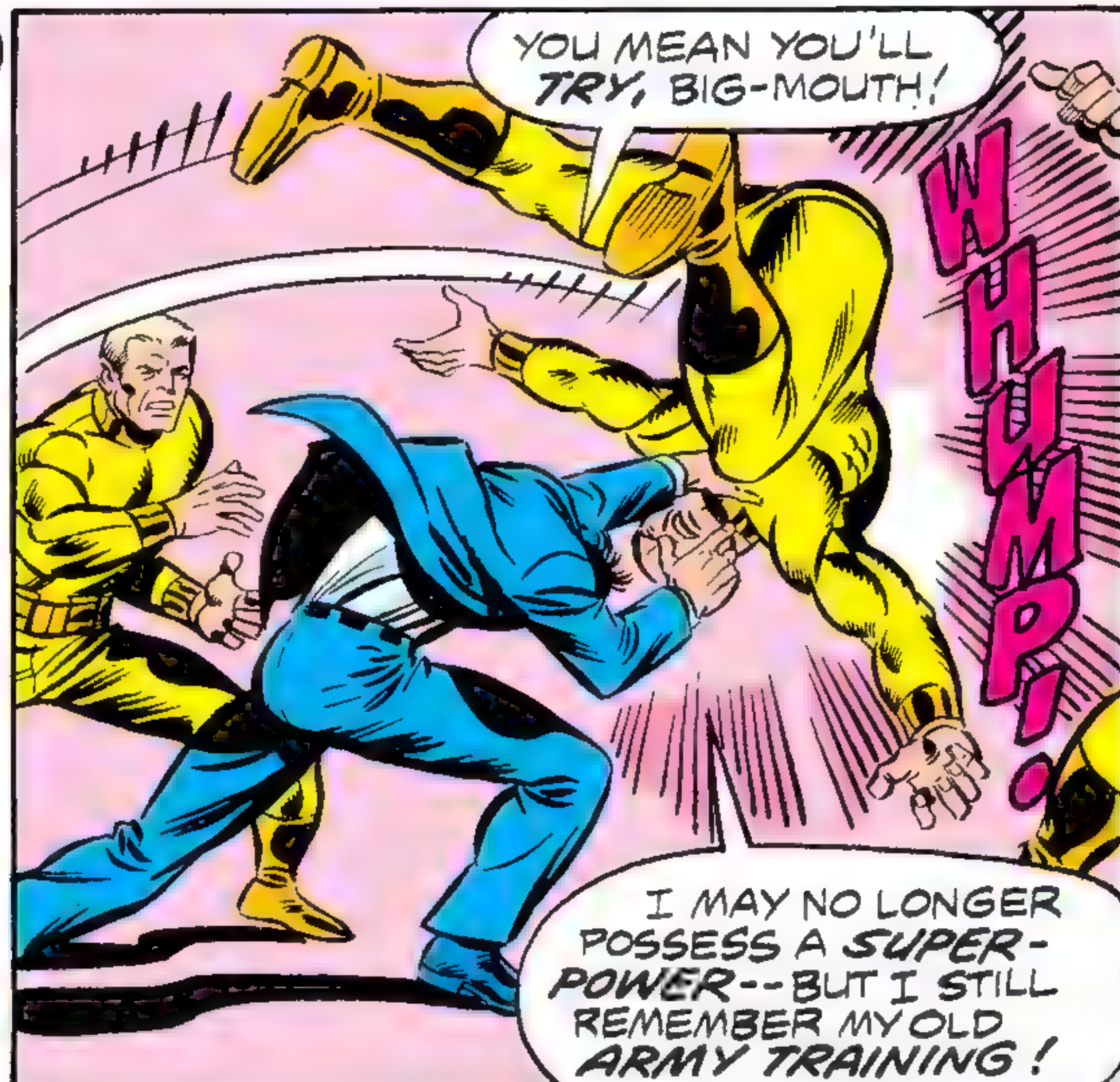
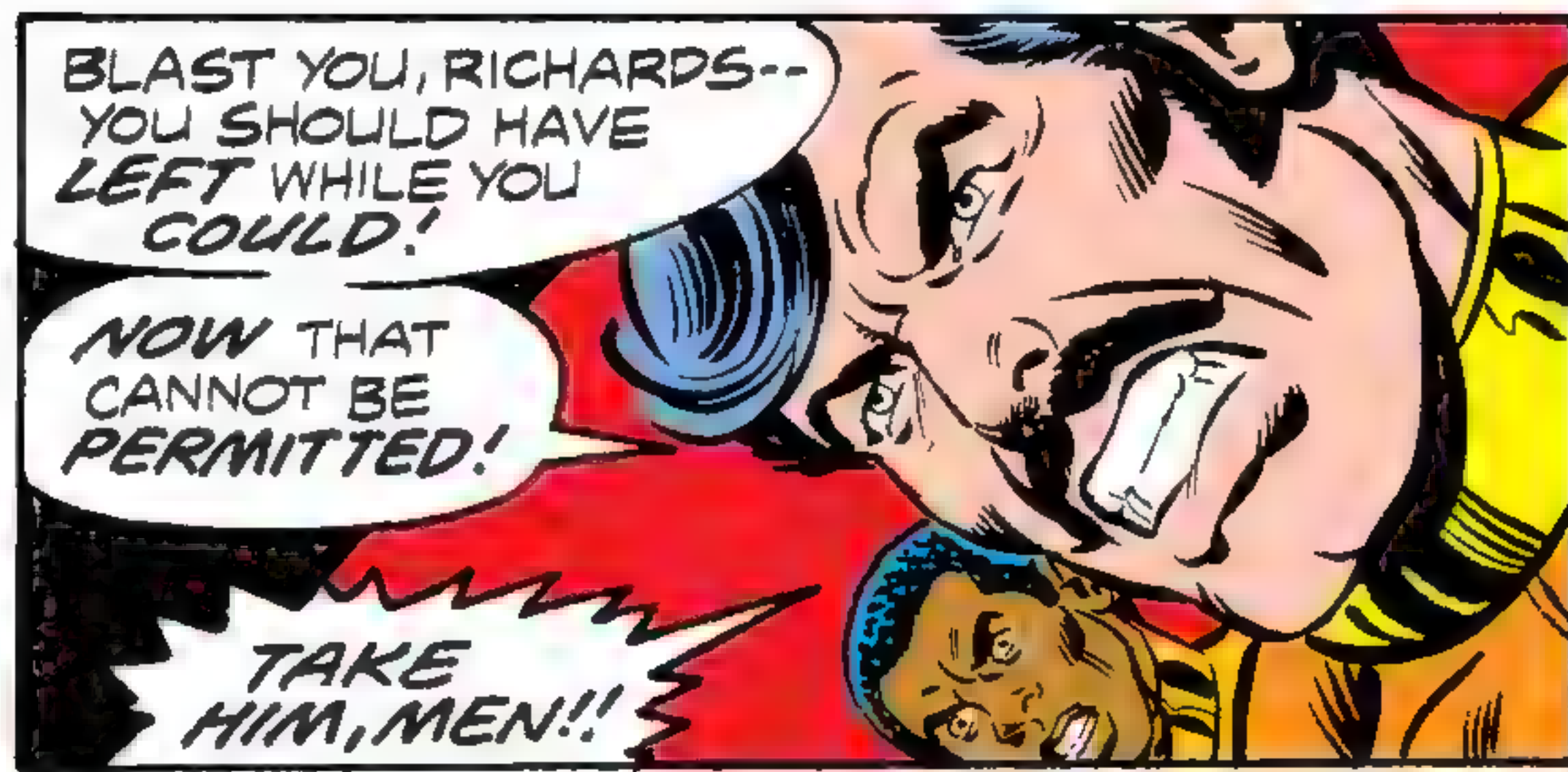
MR. GRIMM, WOULD YOU CARE TO **COMMENT** ON THE RUMOR THAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE BREAKING UP BECAUSE **YOU** DEMANDED TO BE **LEADER?**

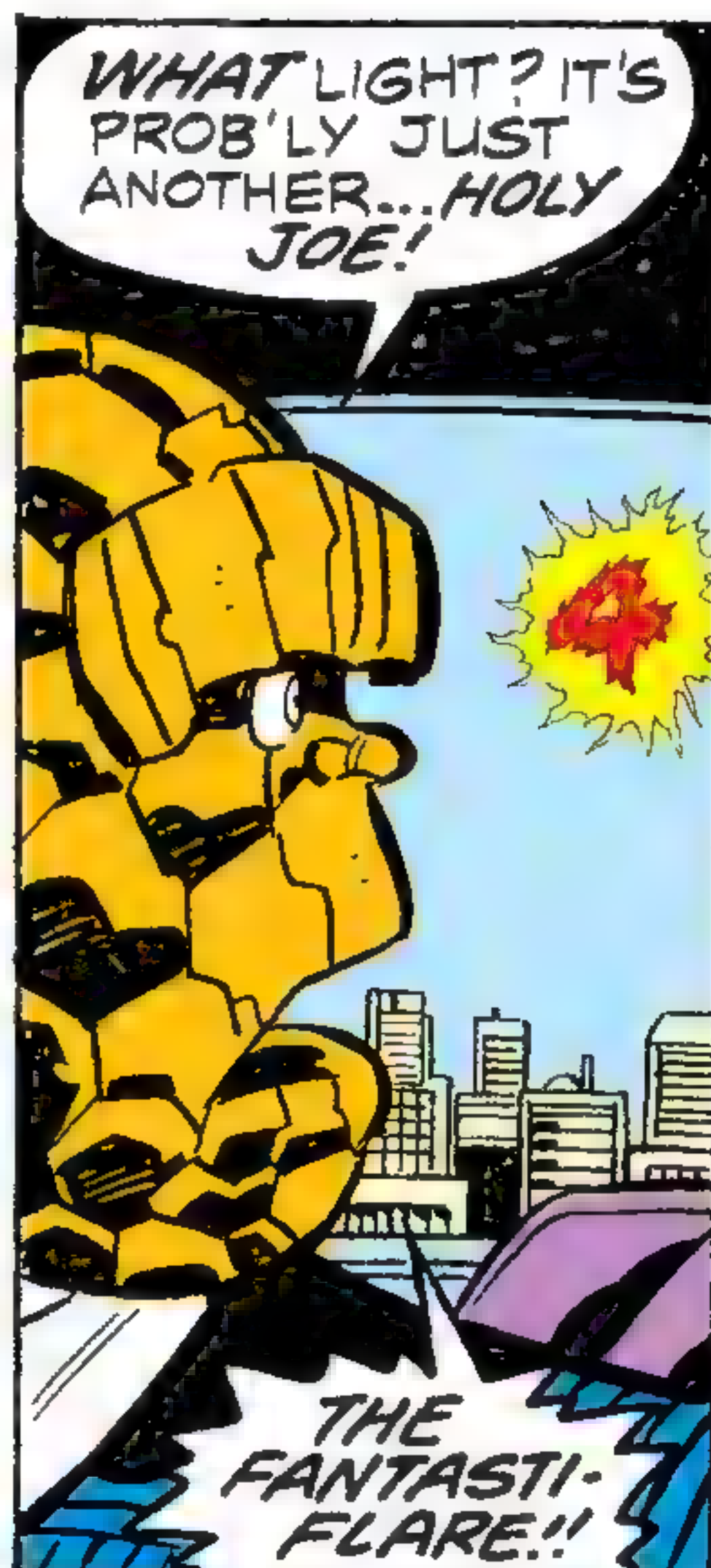
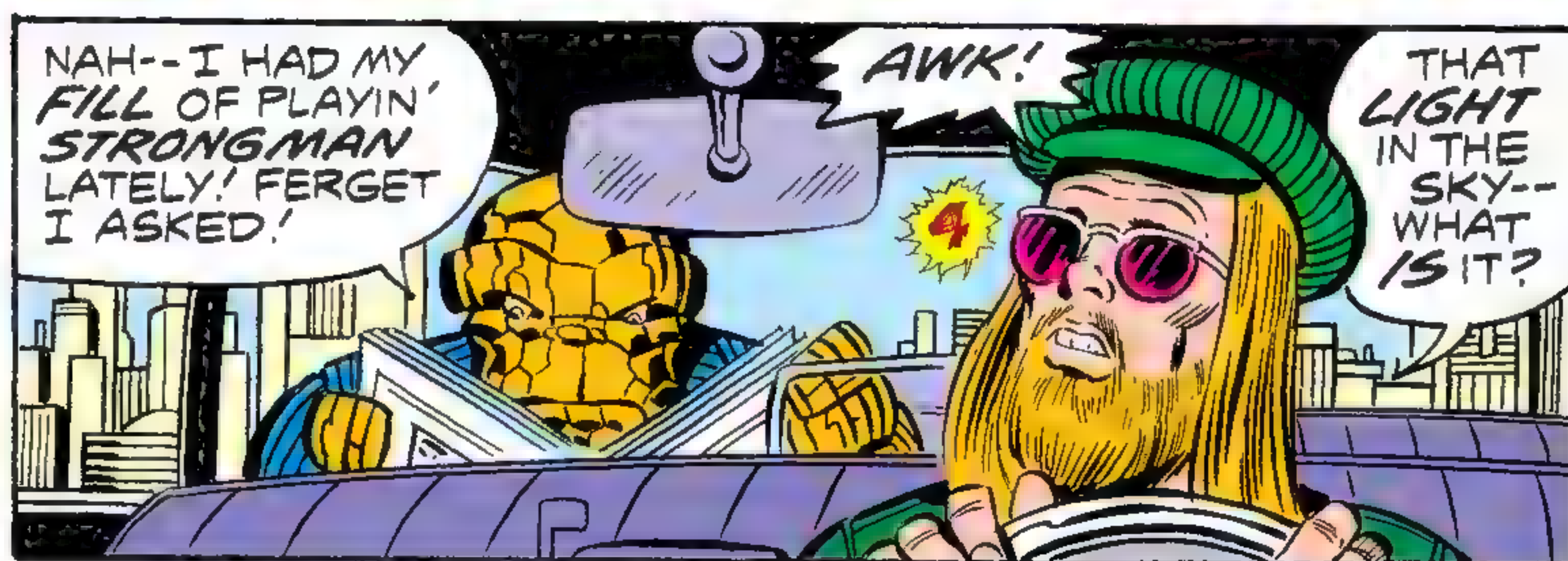
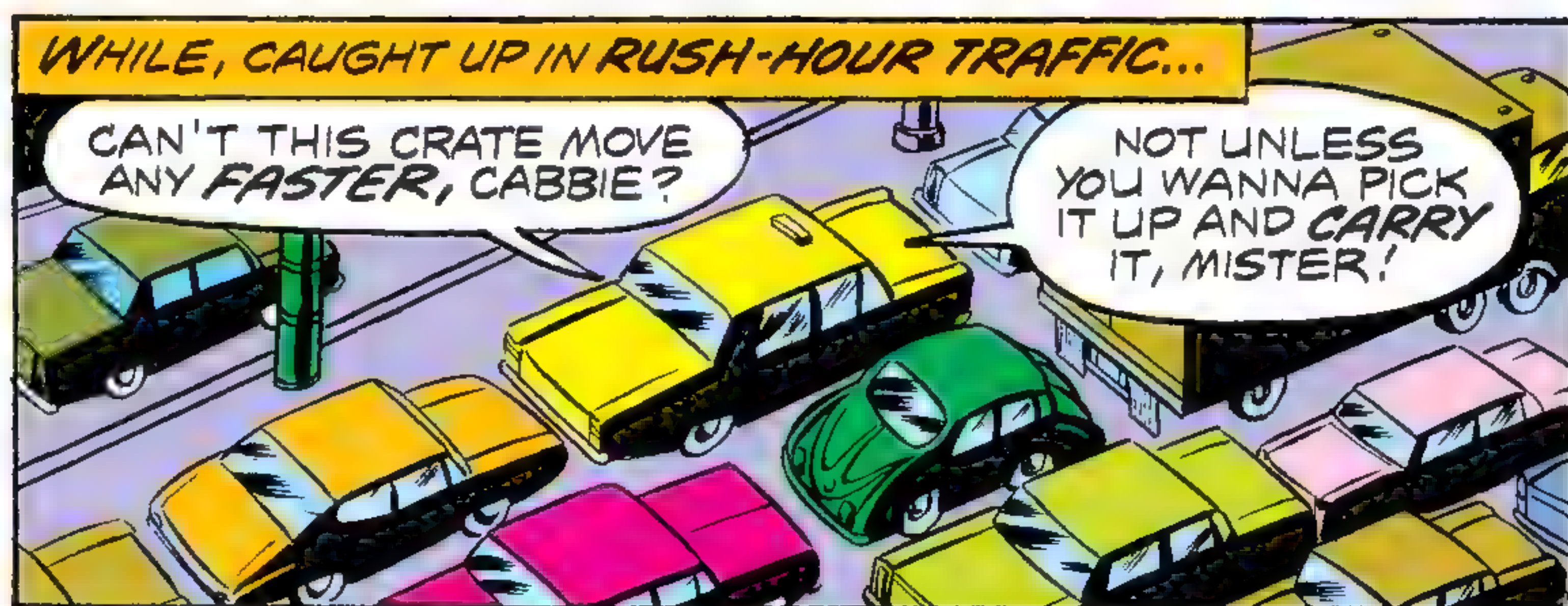
WHA--?!!?

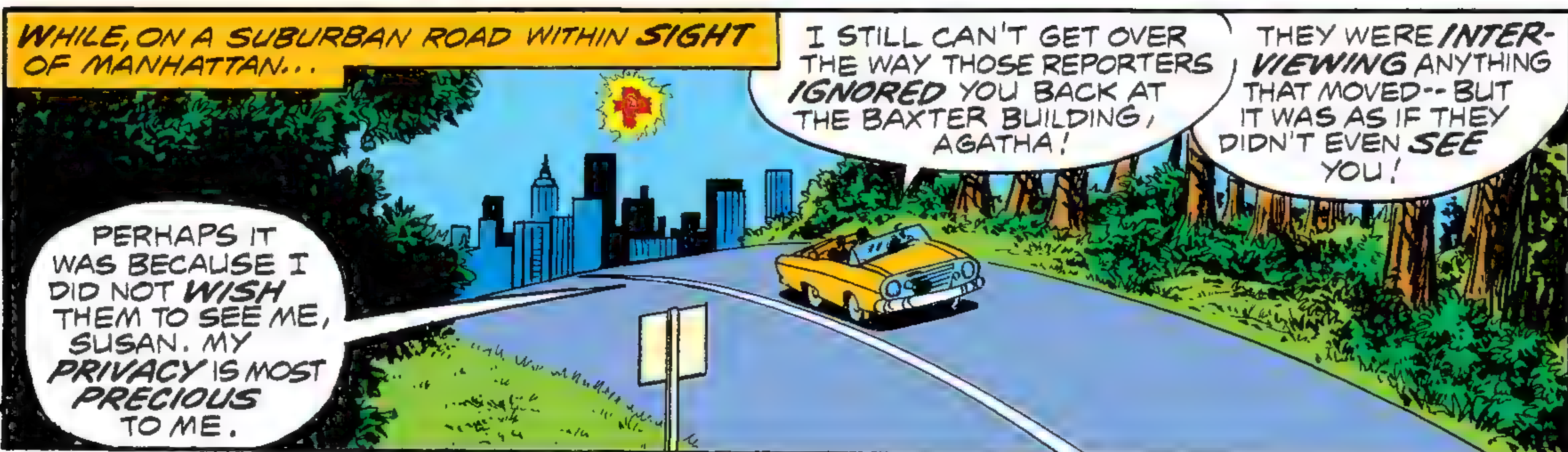
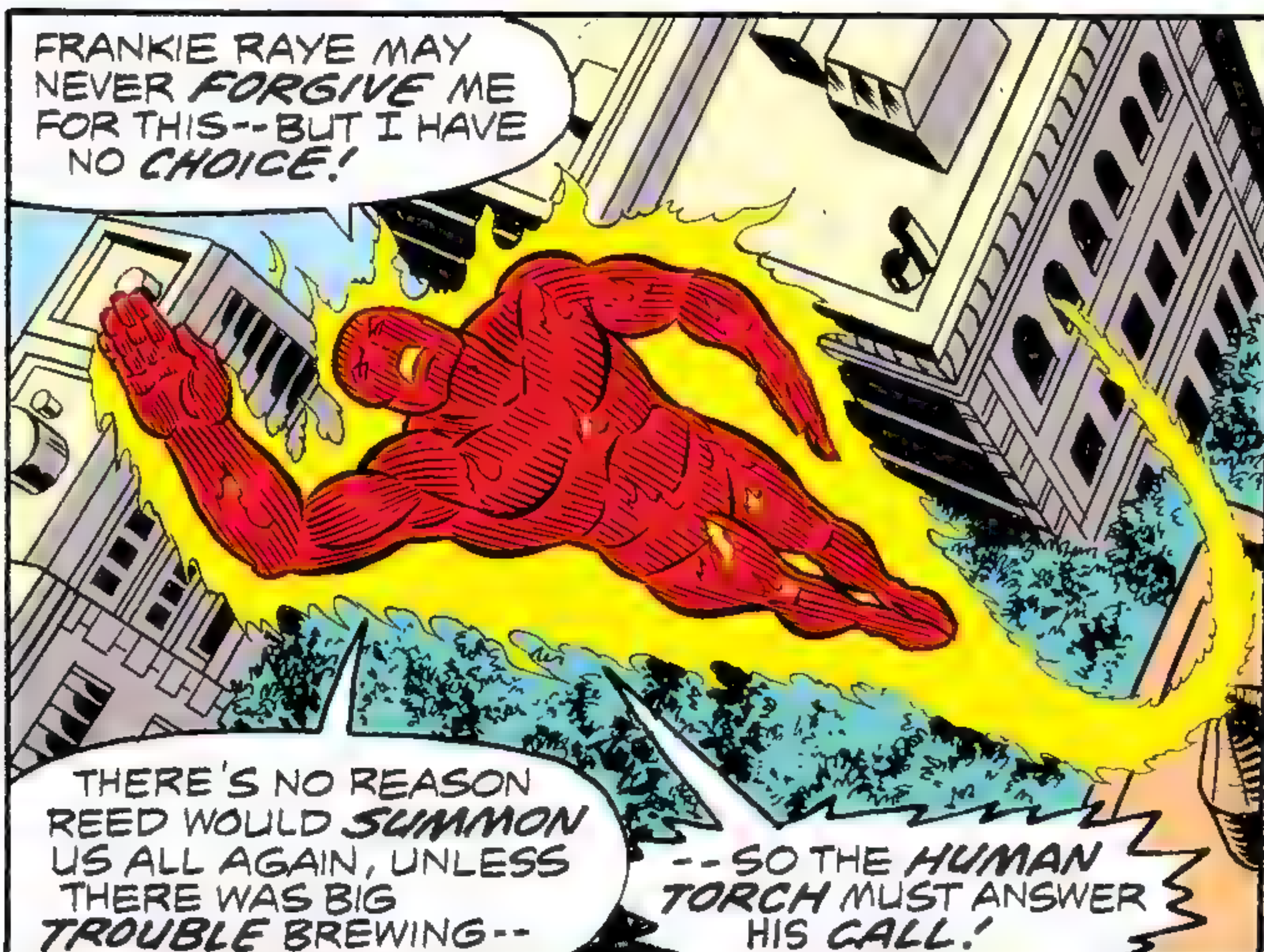
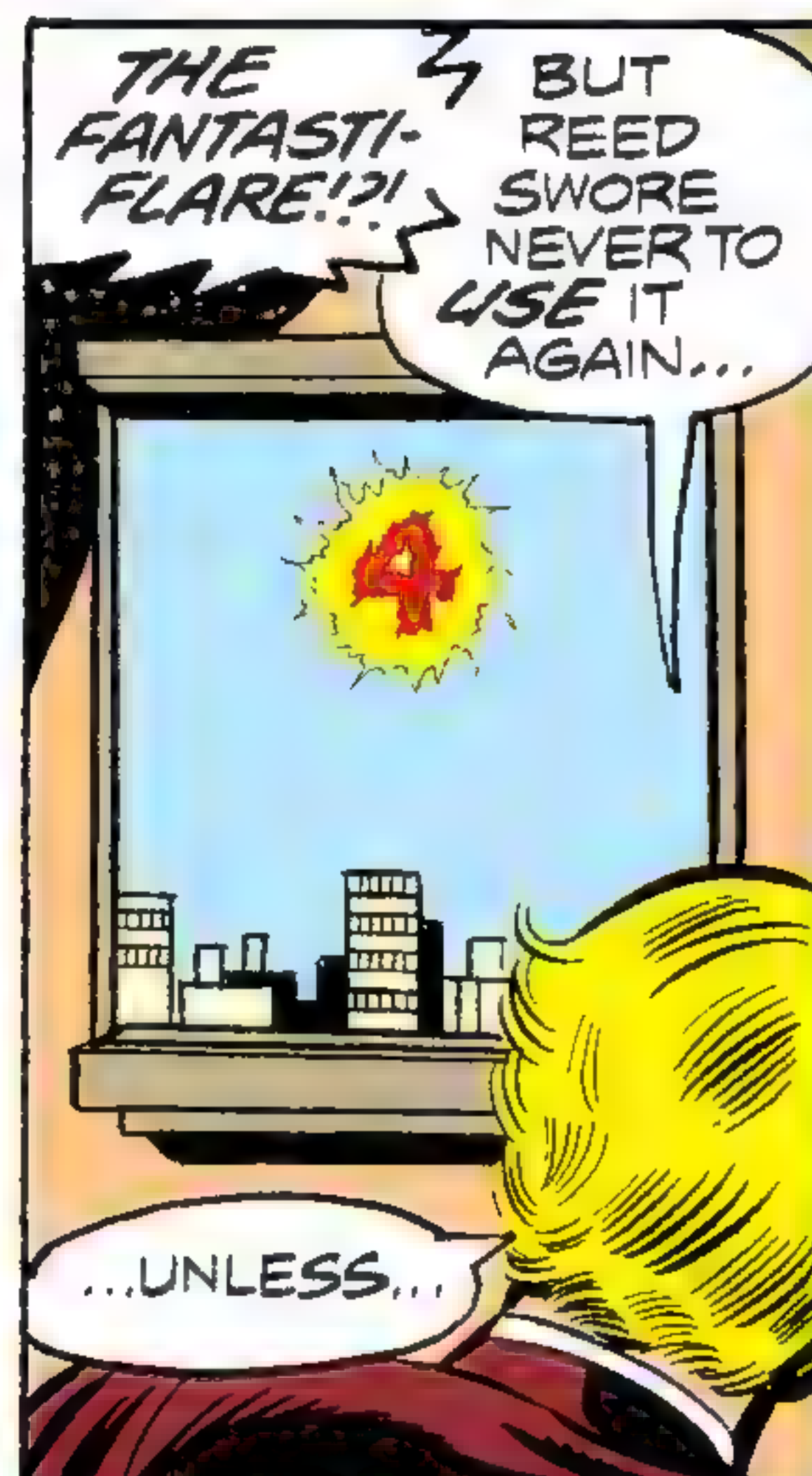
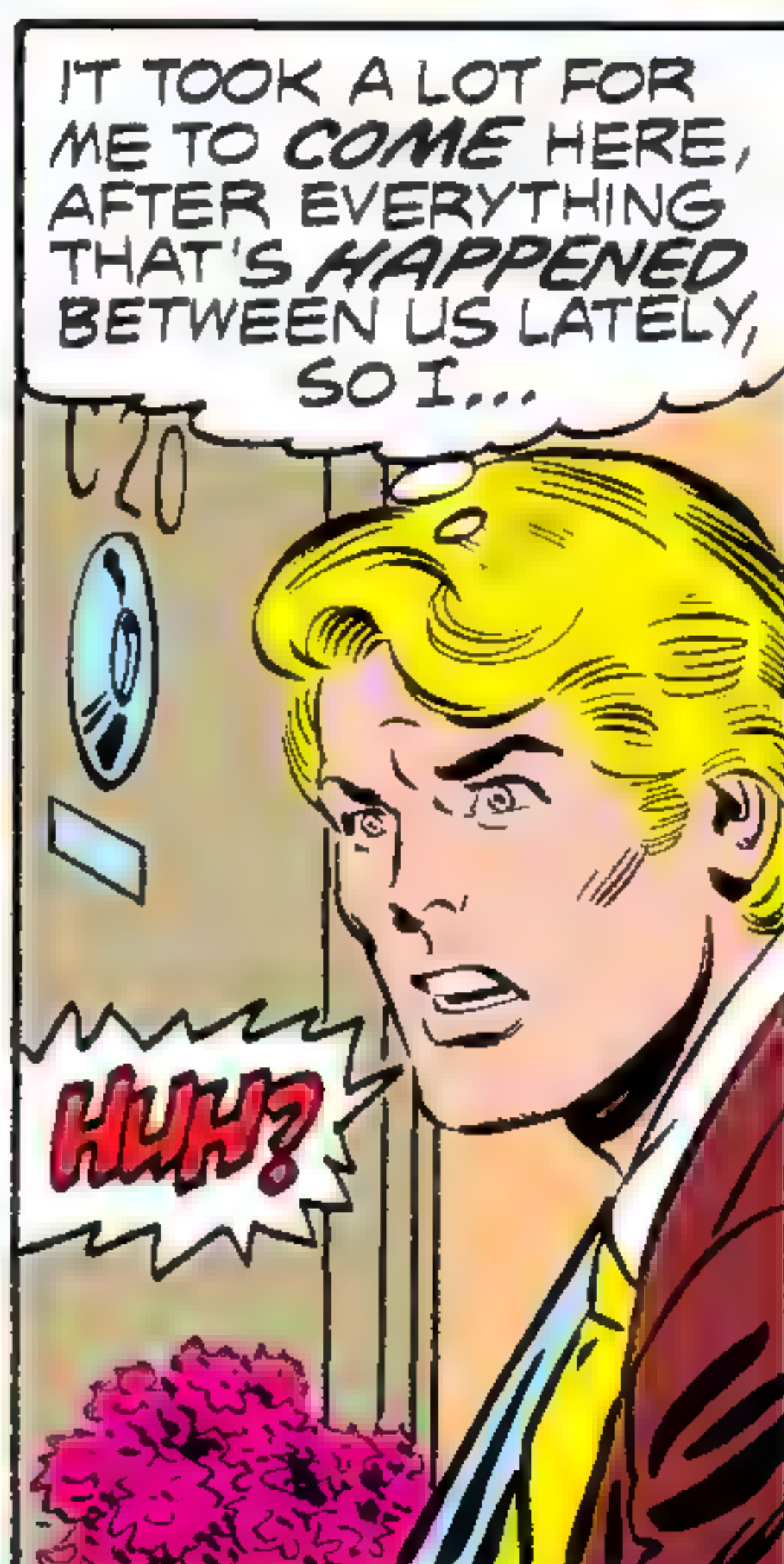
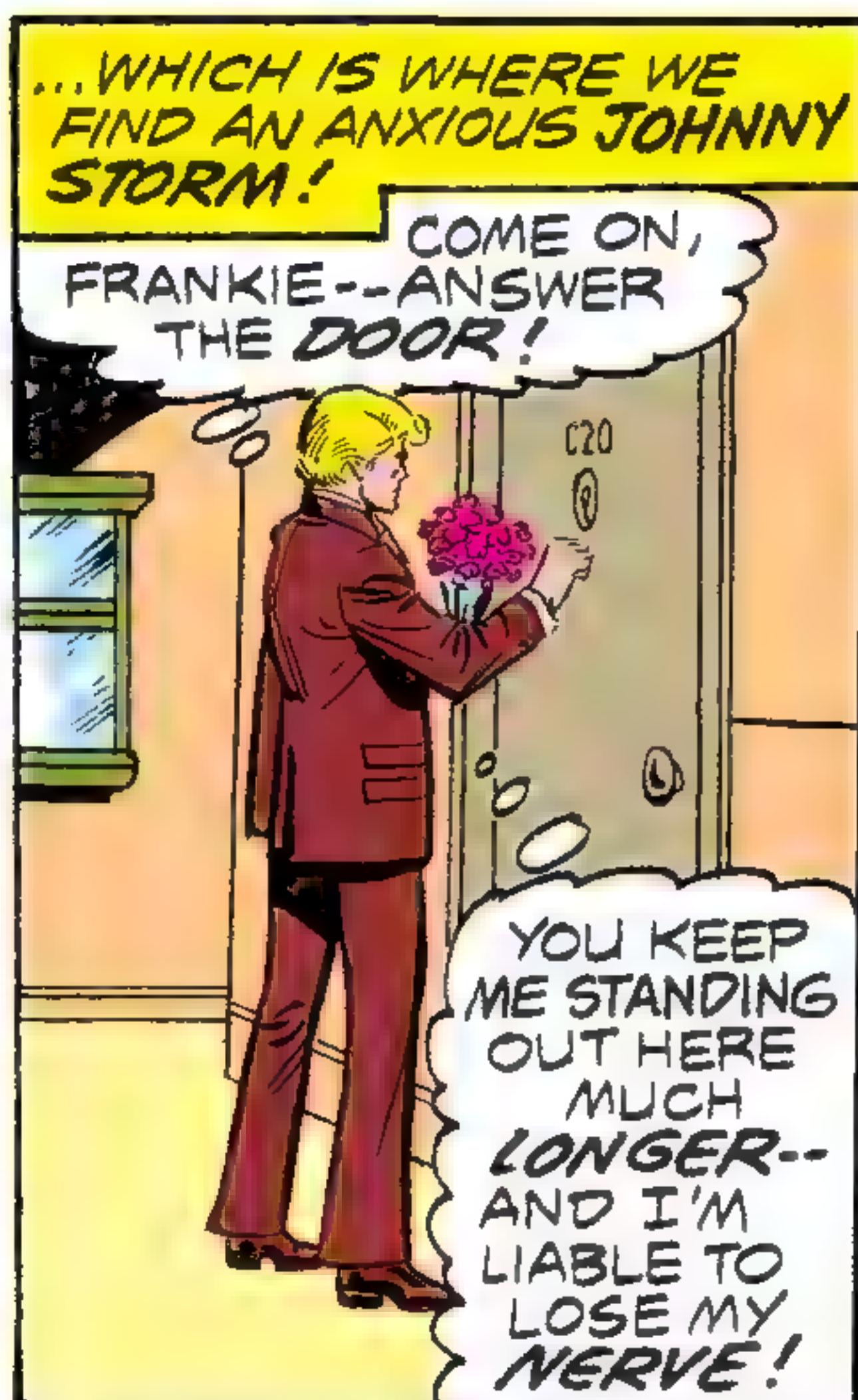
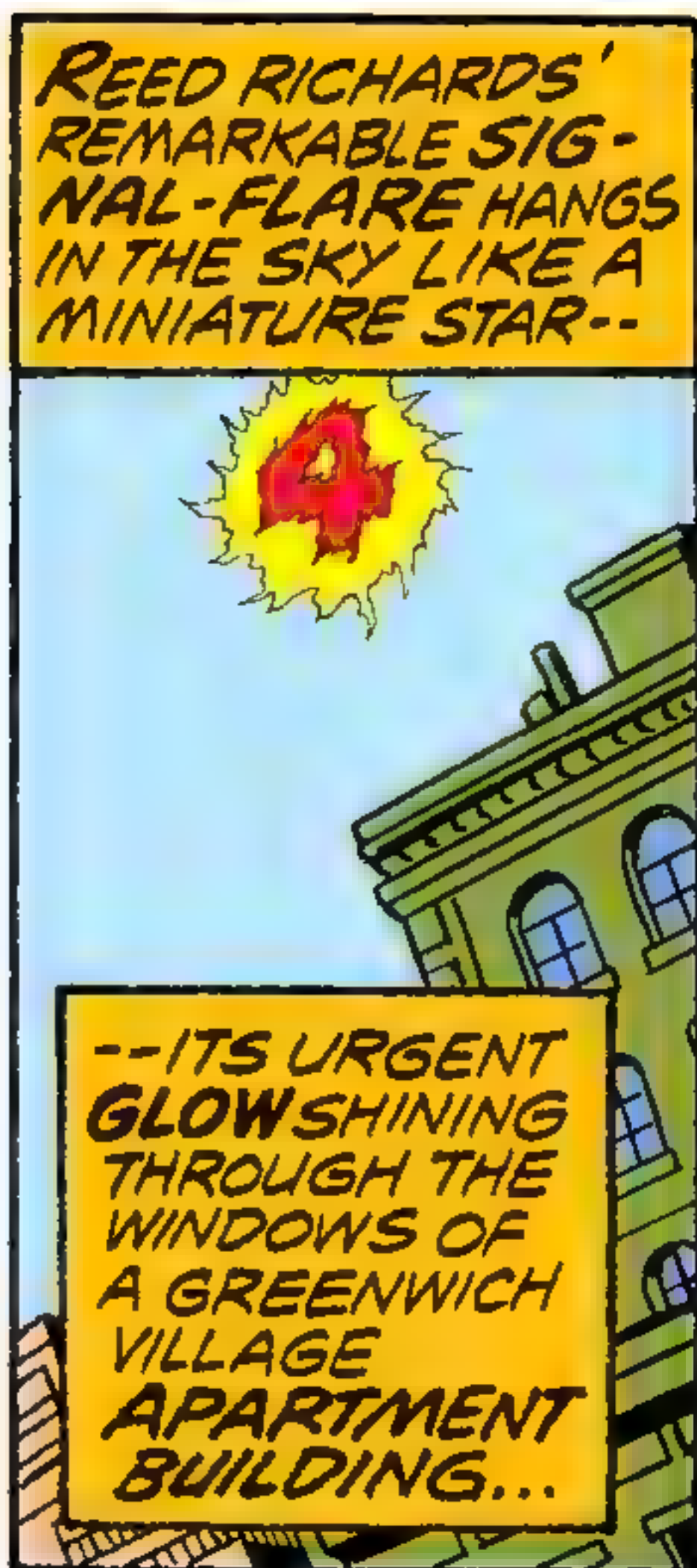
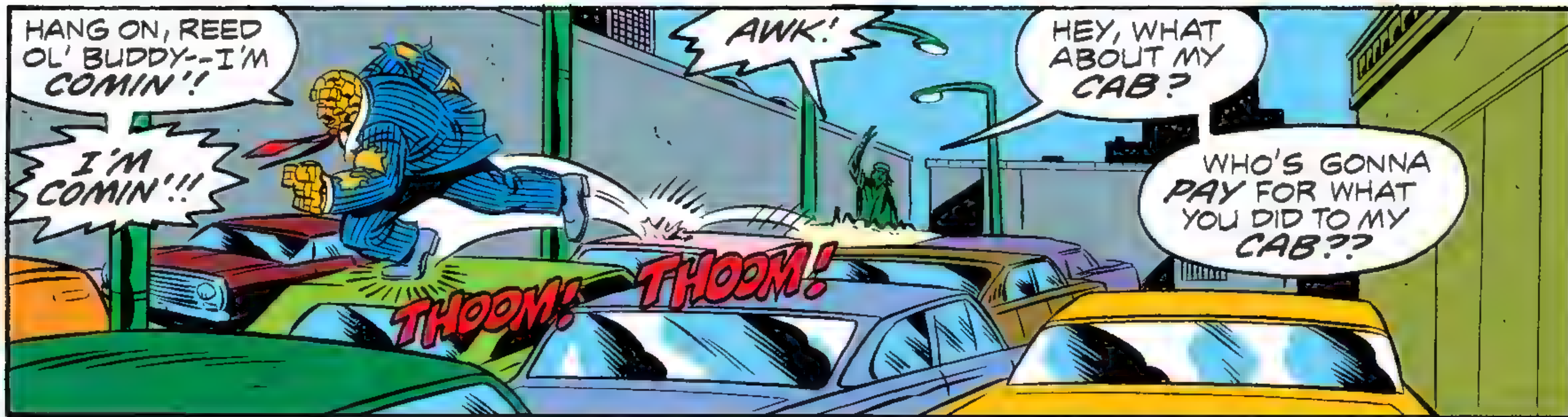


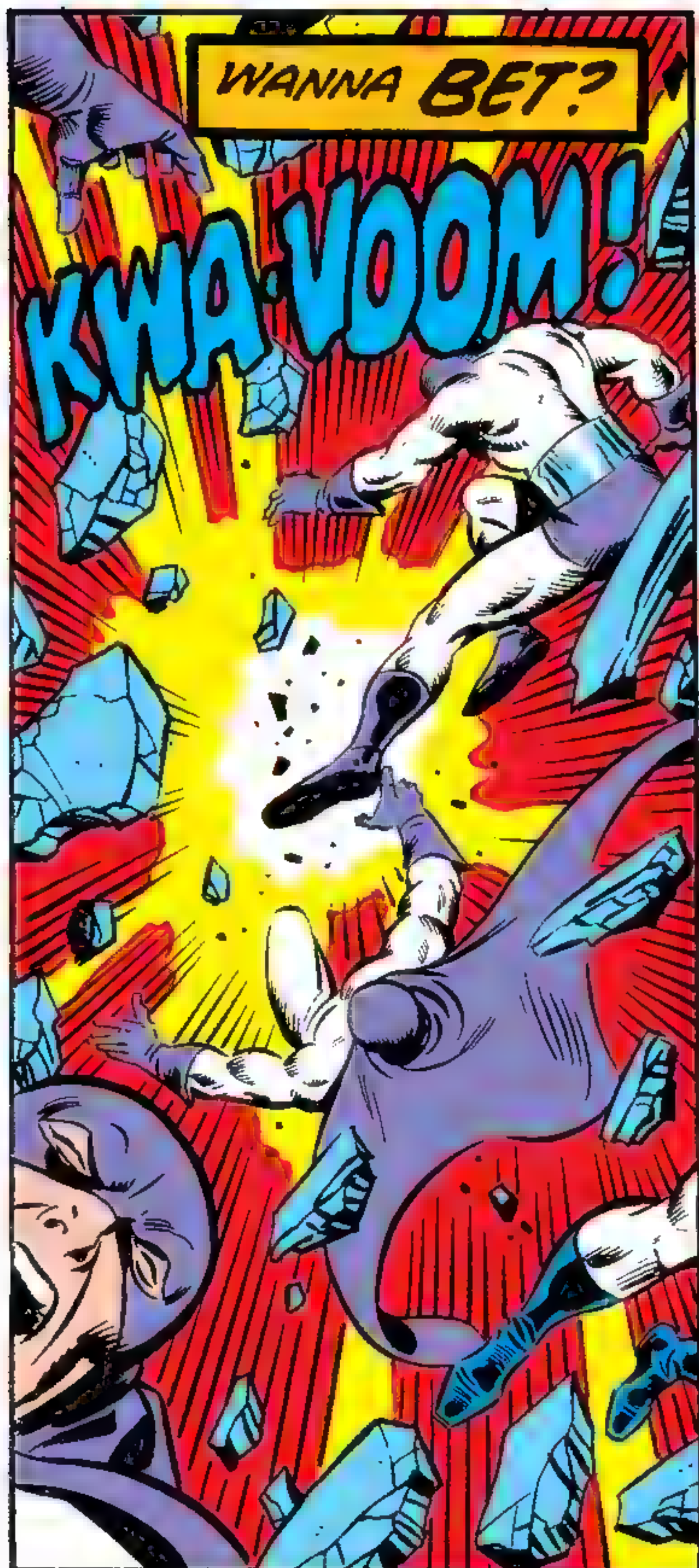
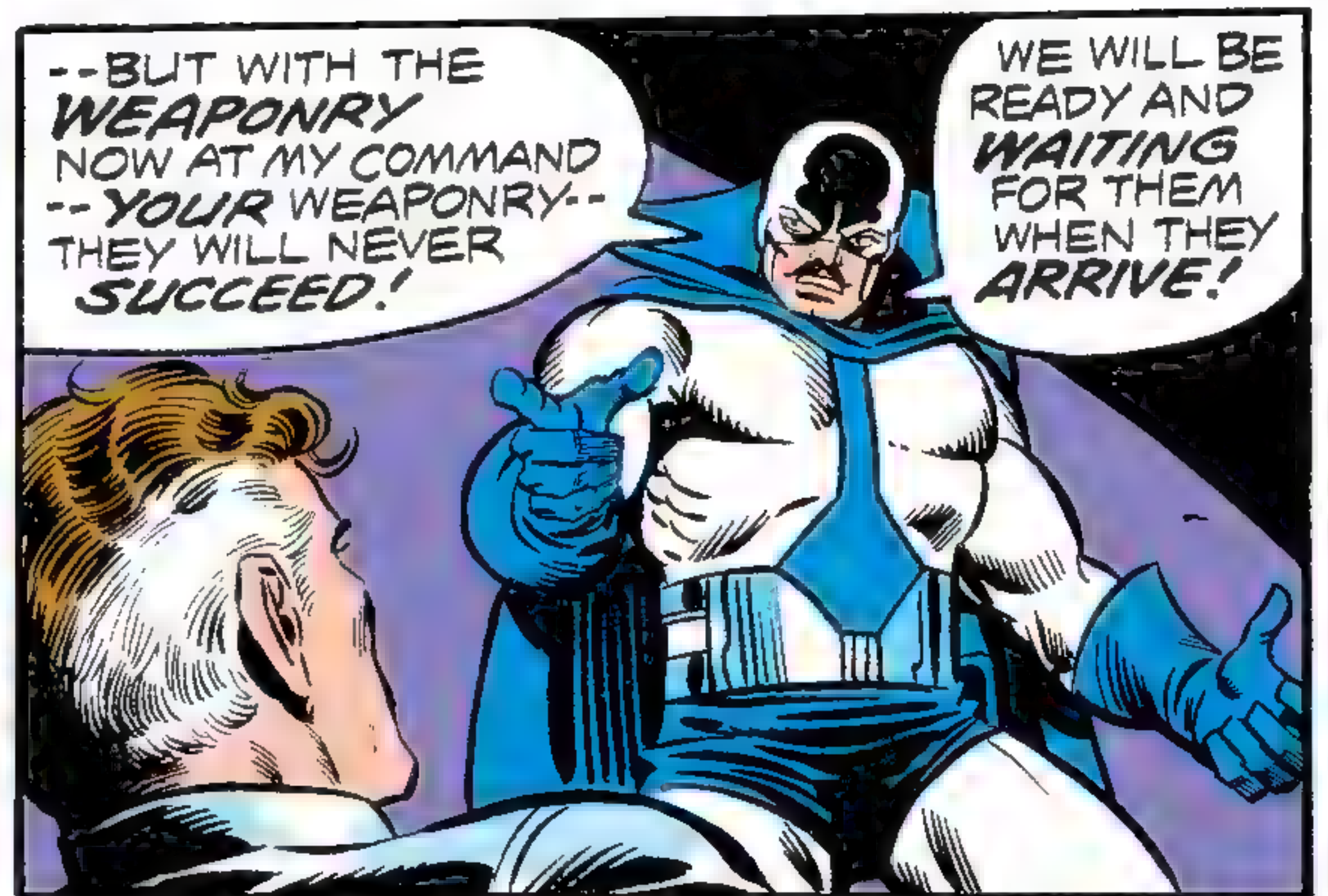
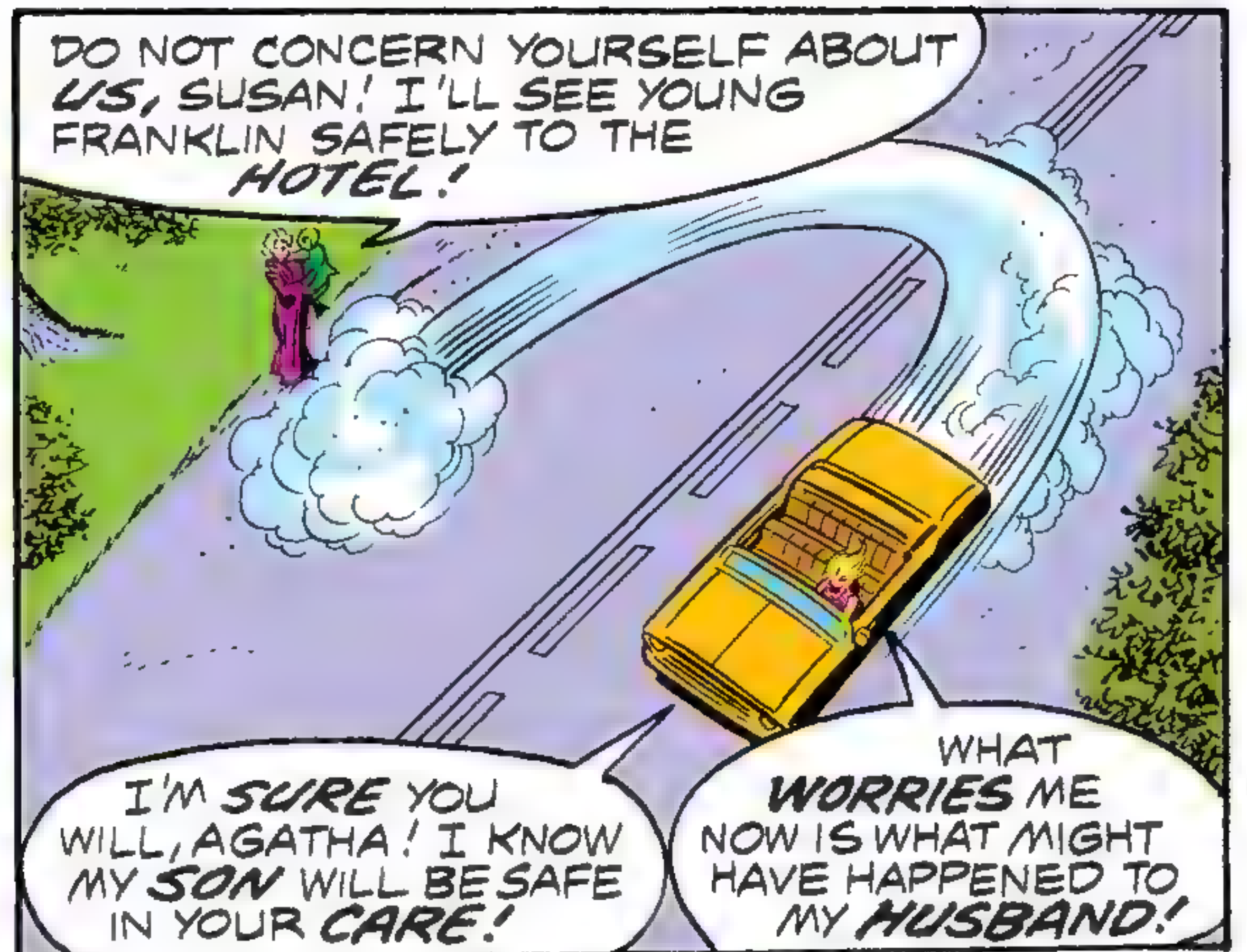
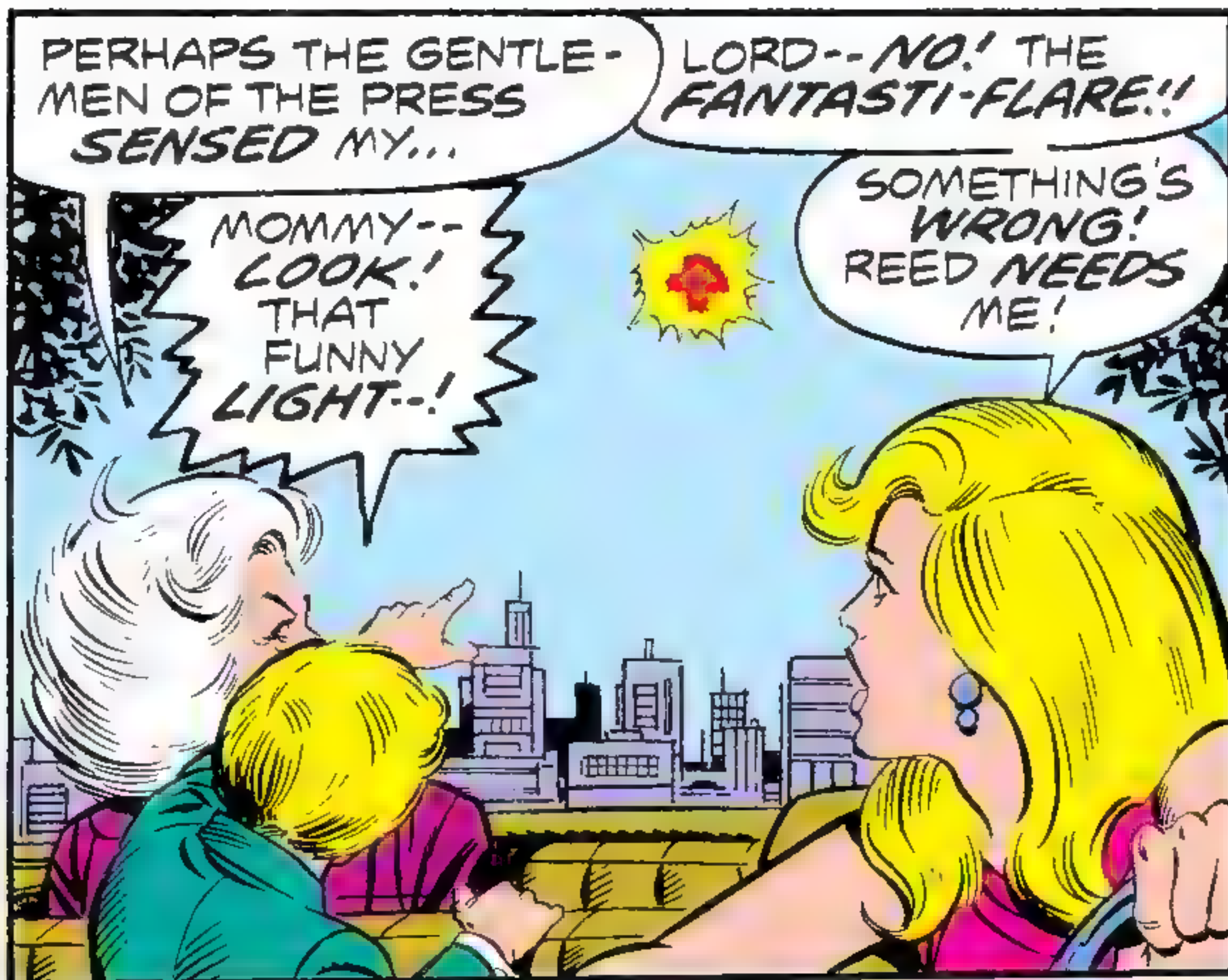


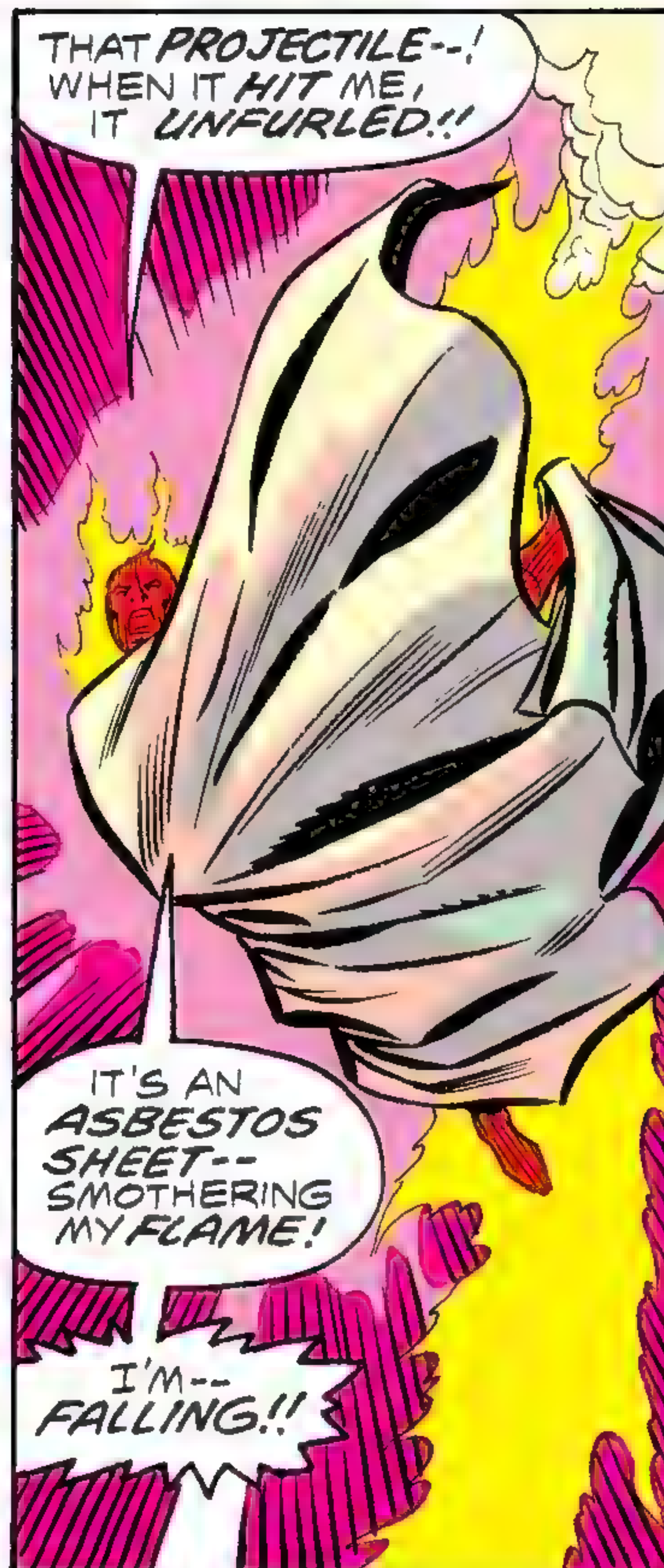
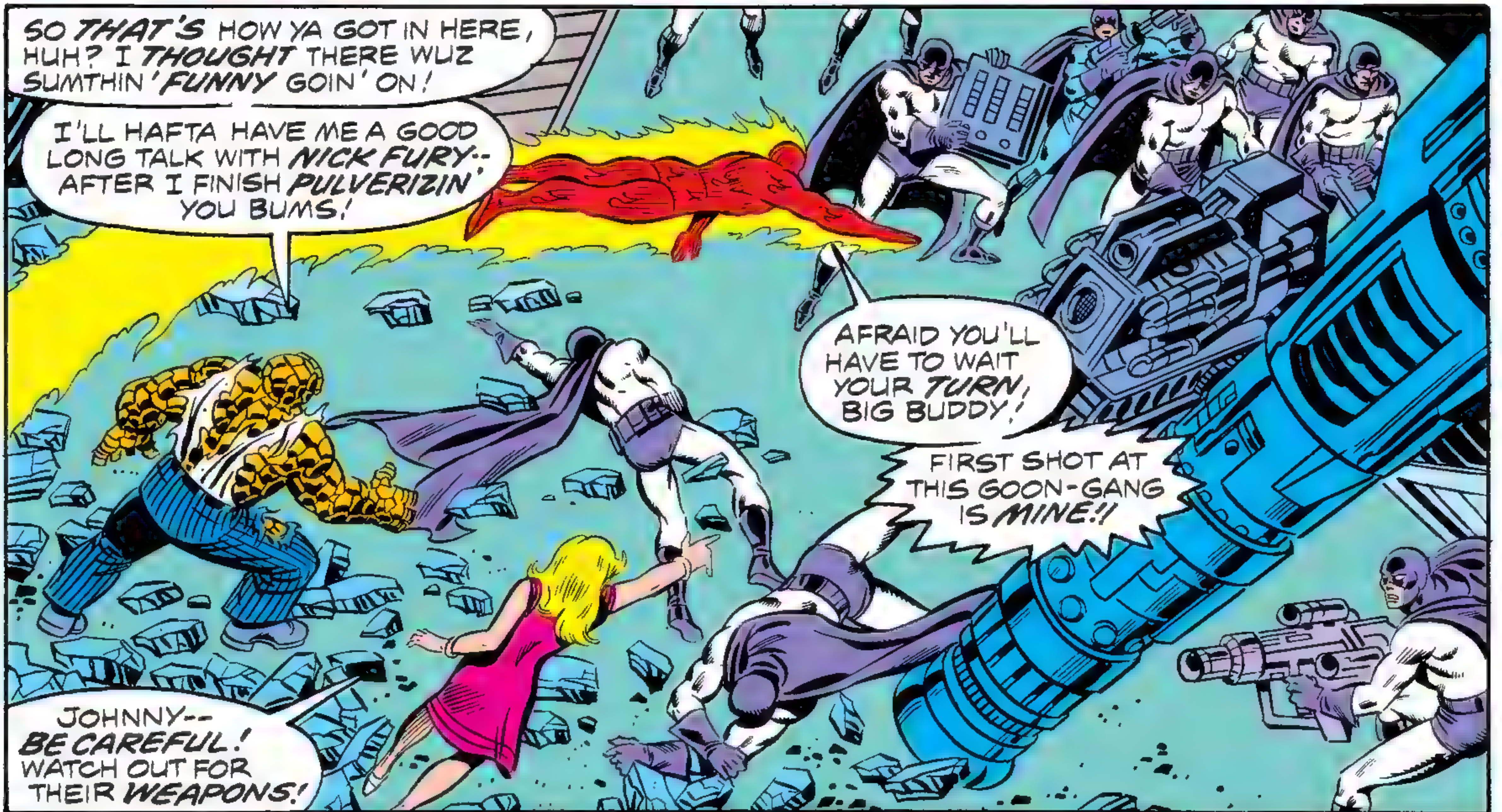


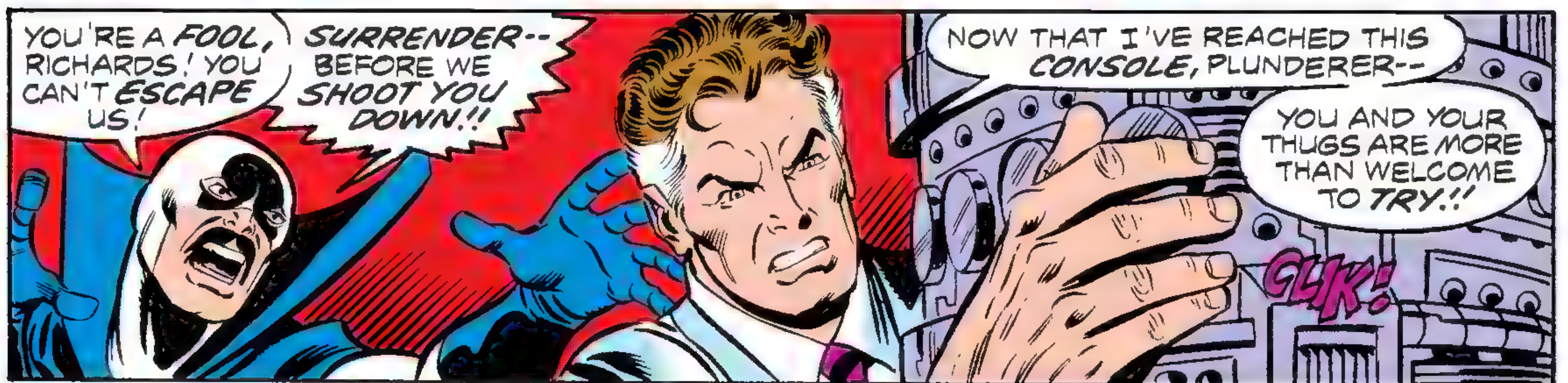
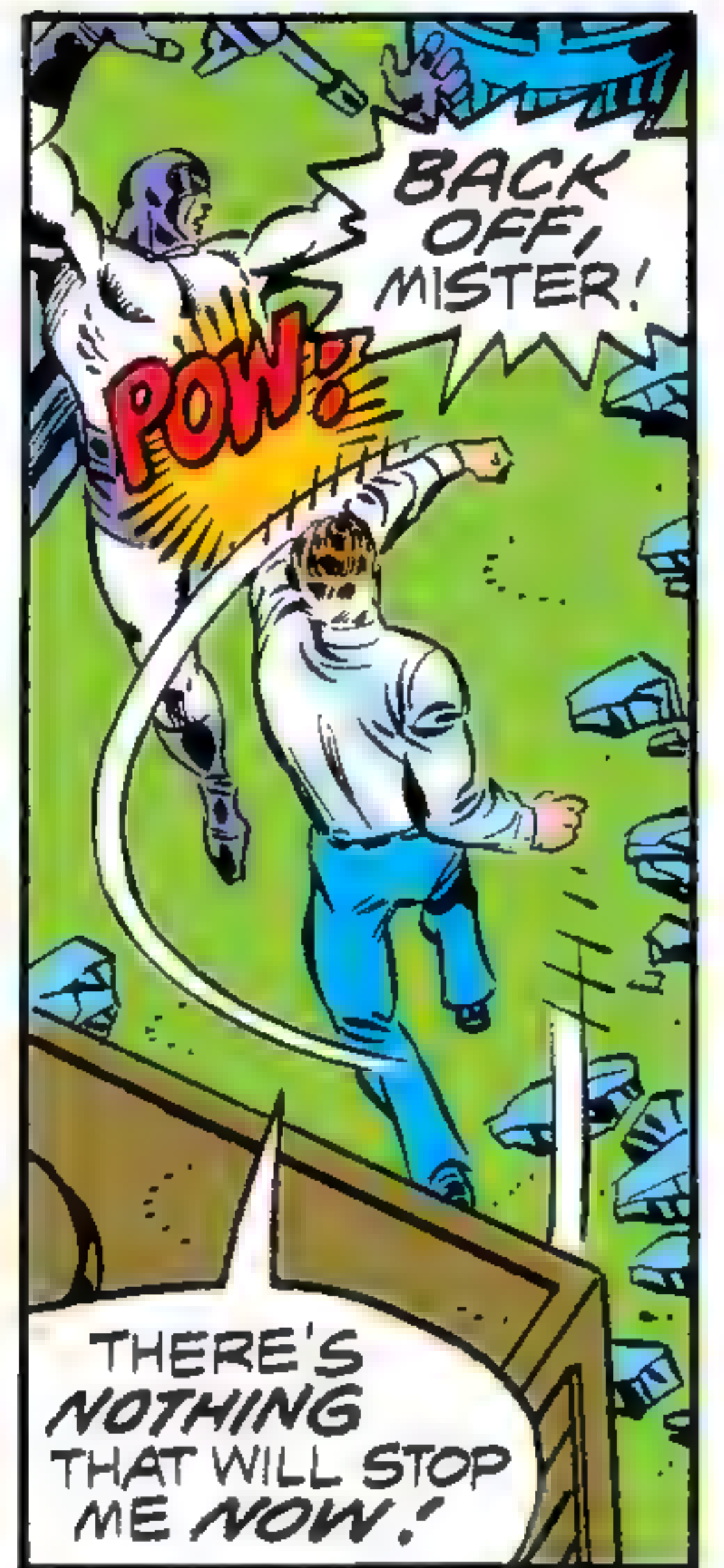
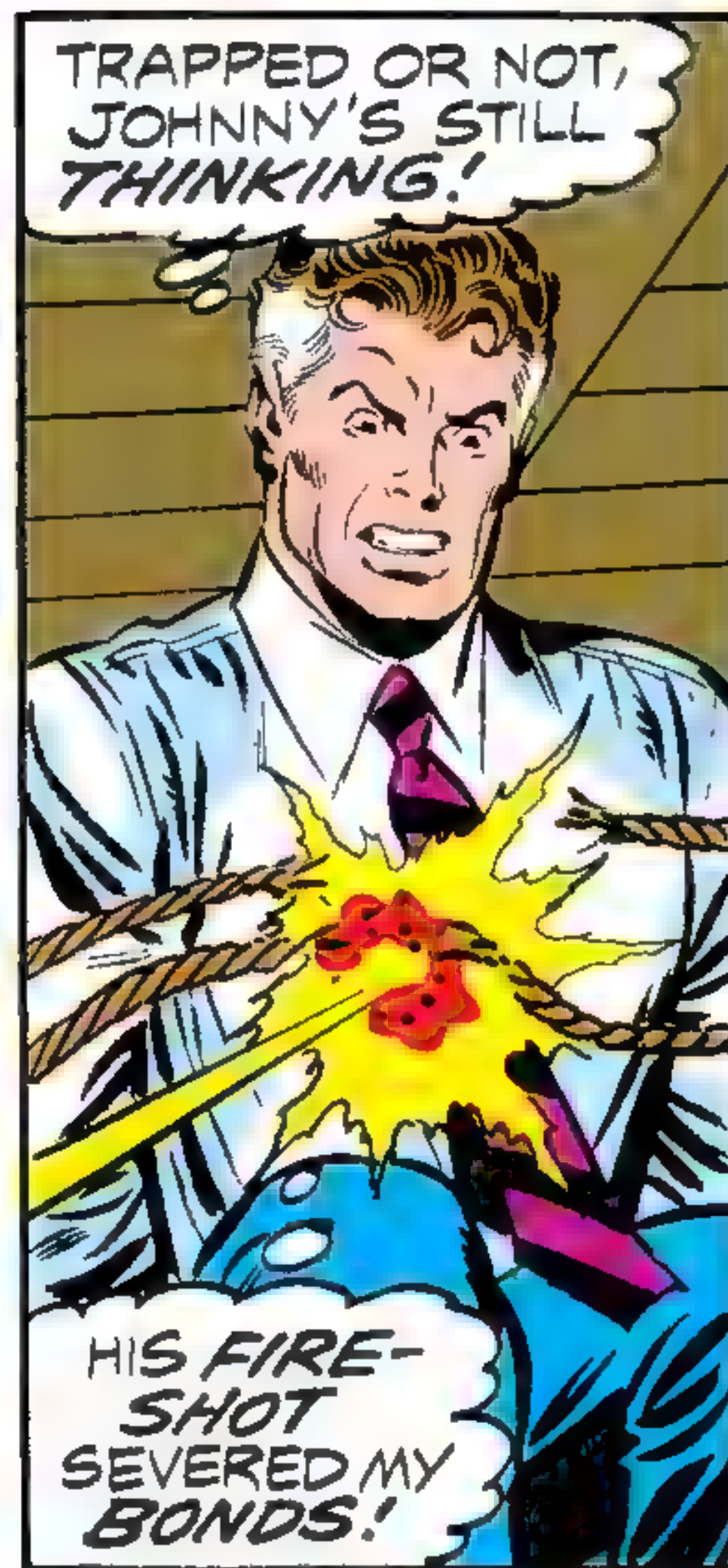
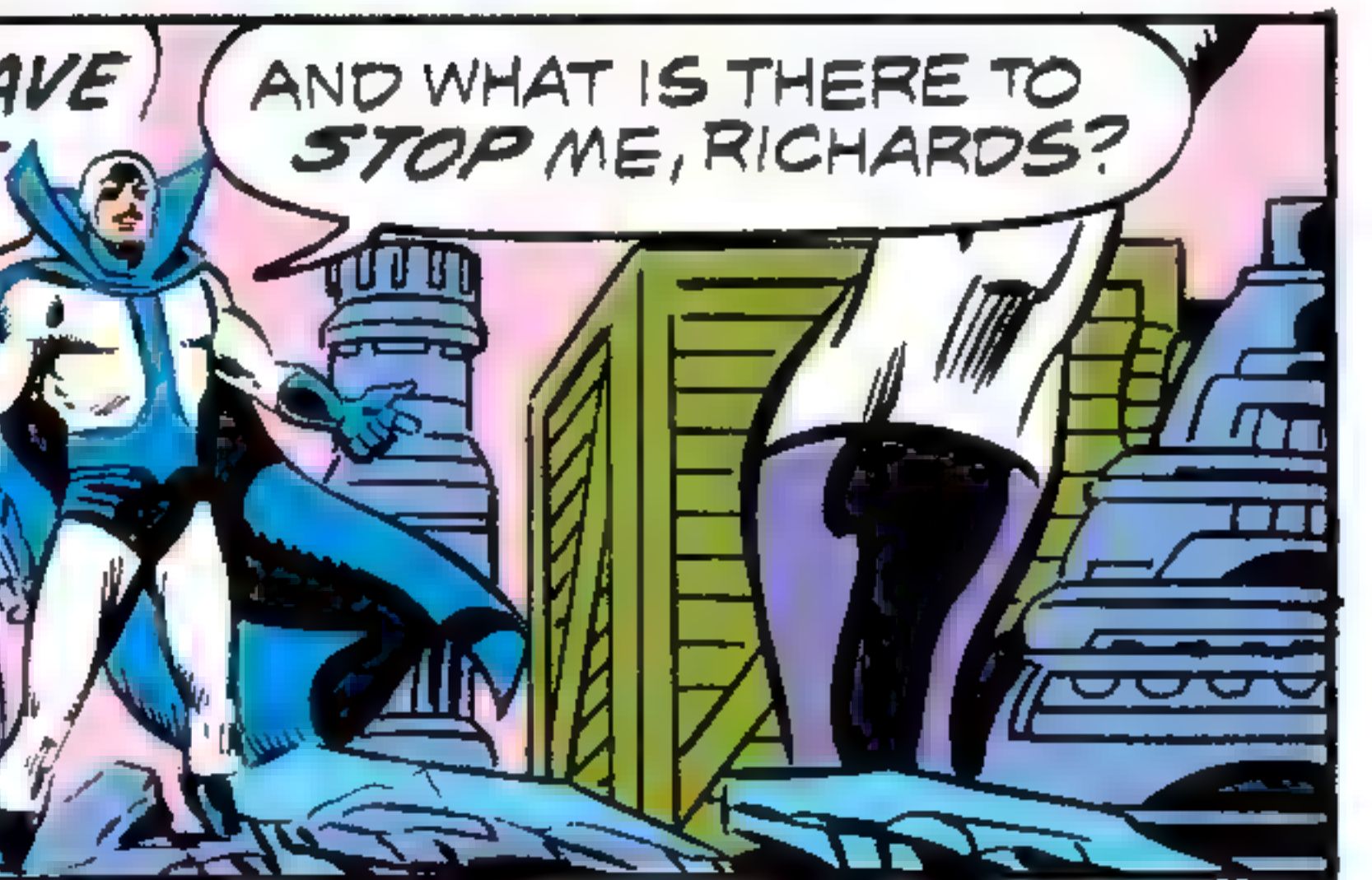
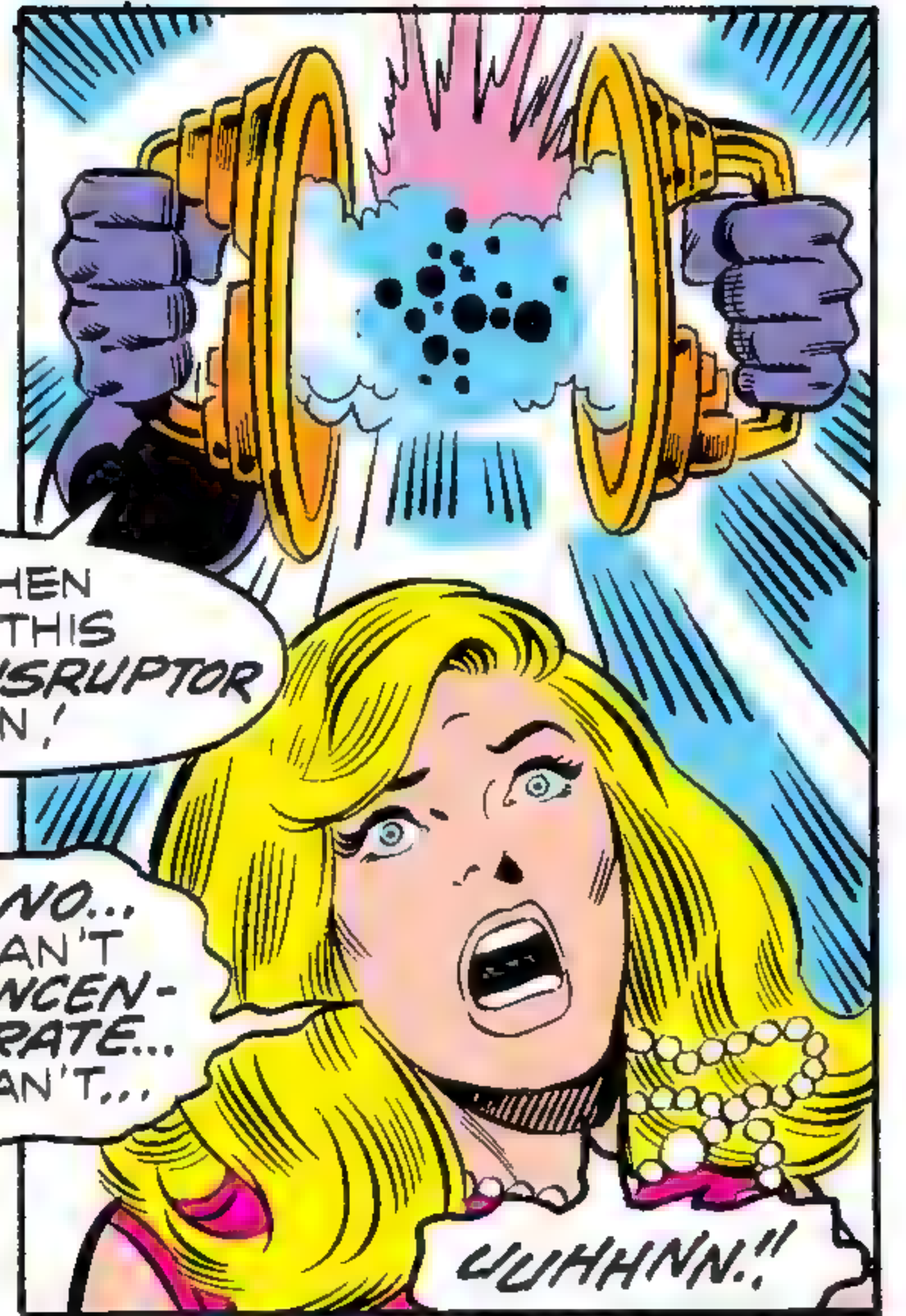
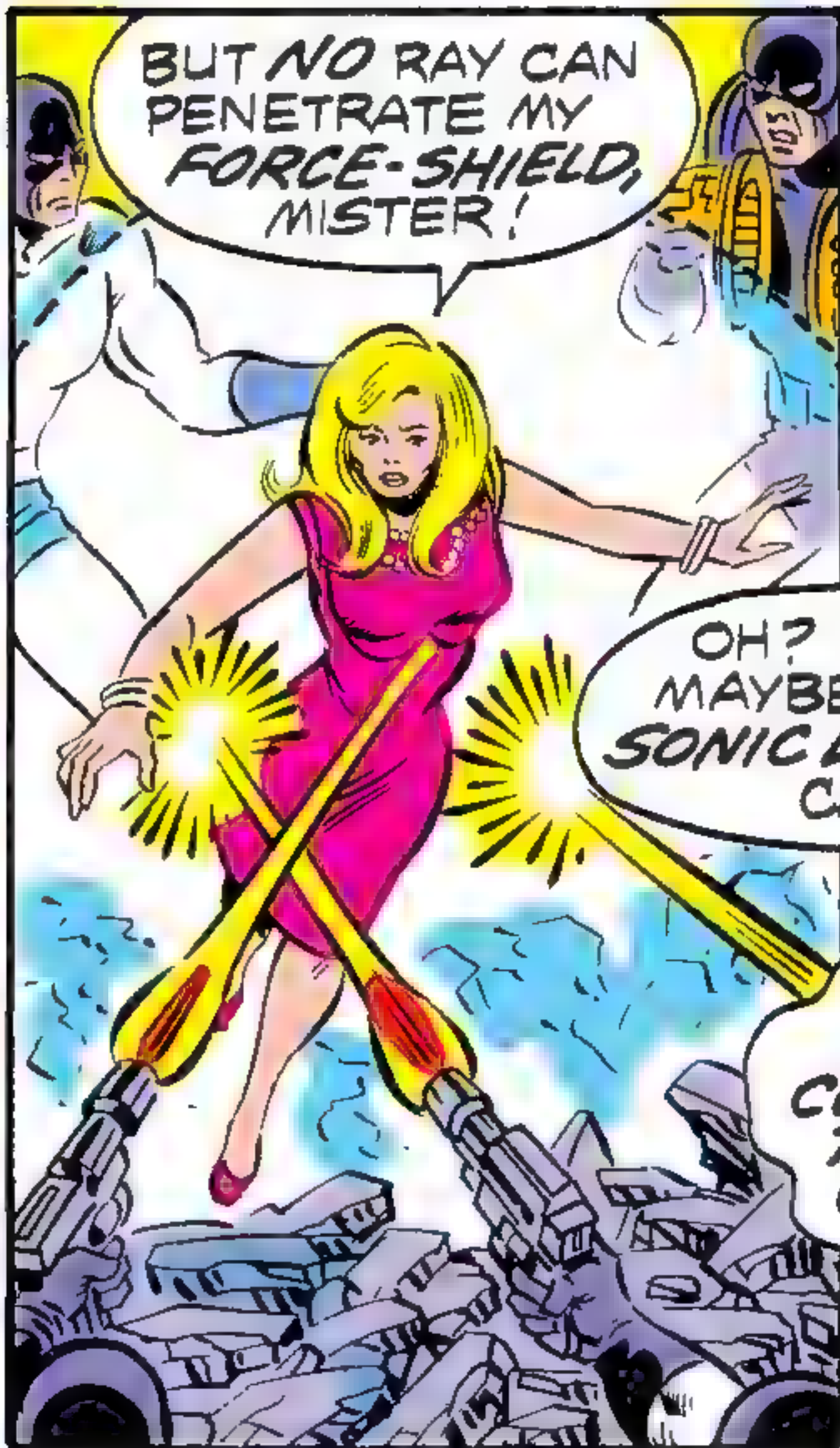
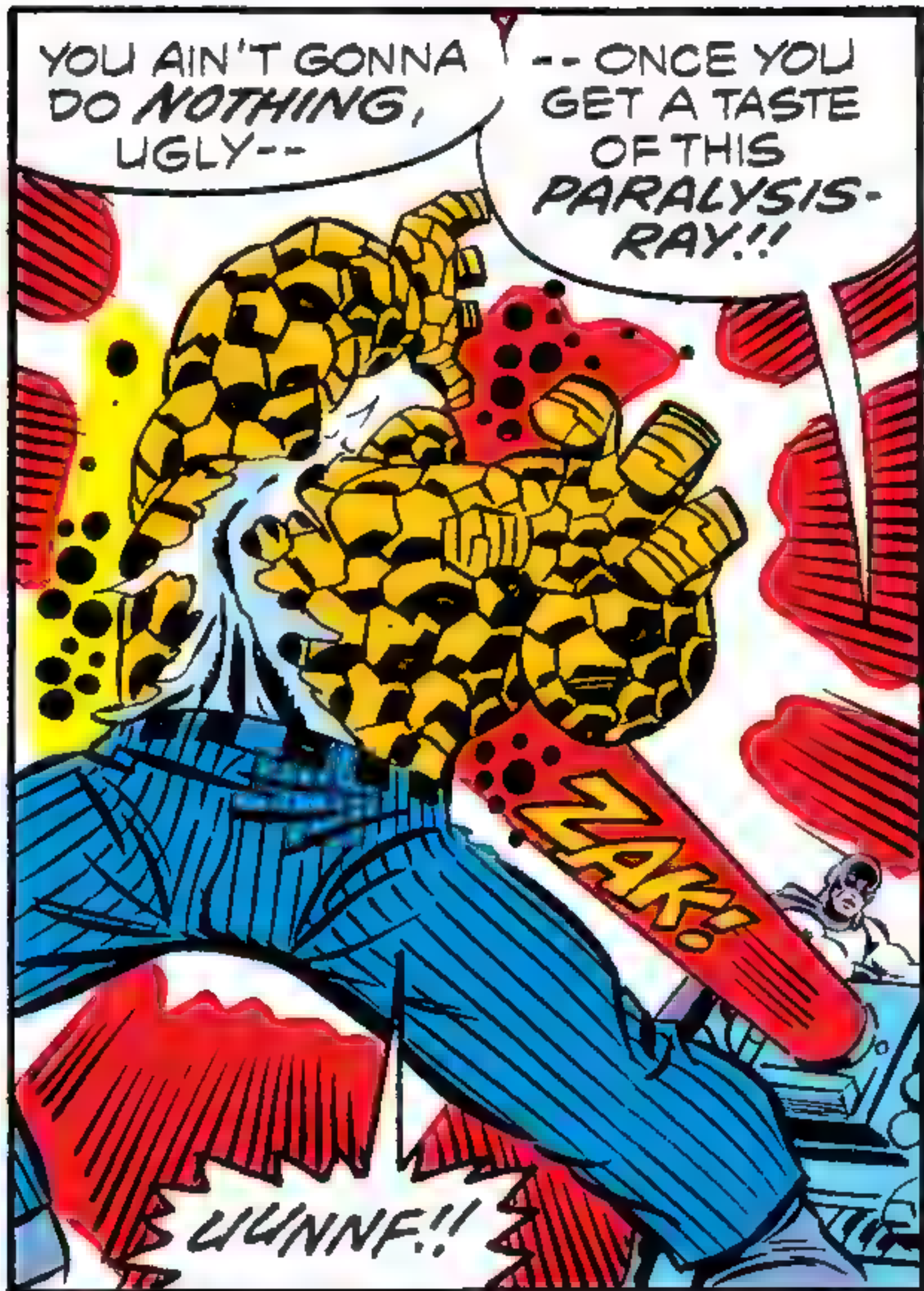














HEY-- THERE'S SOMETHIN' SCREWY GOIN' ON HERE!

THIS FANCY RIFLE--IT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE!!

NONE OF THE FF'S GIZMOS WORK ANYMORE!!



BLAST YOU, RICHARDS-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

I ACTIVATED THE EMERGENCY FAIL-SAFE I'VE INSTALLED IN EVERYTHING I'VE EVER CREATED!

THOSE WEAPONS ARE JUST CANDIDATES FOR THE SCRAP HEAP NOW!

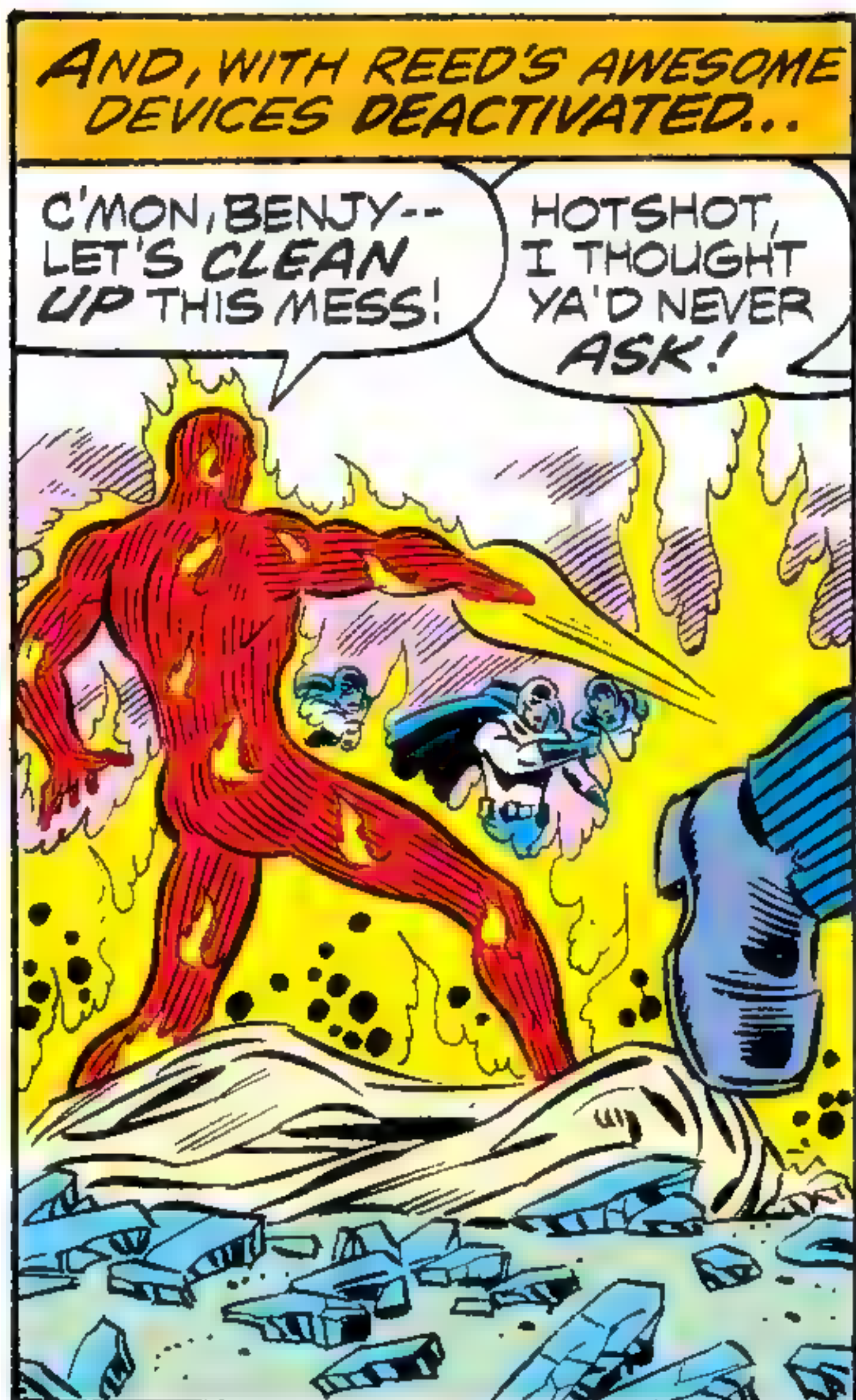


AND FOR THAT MATTER, PLUNDER--

UUNFF!!

POW!

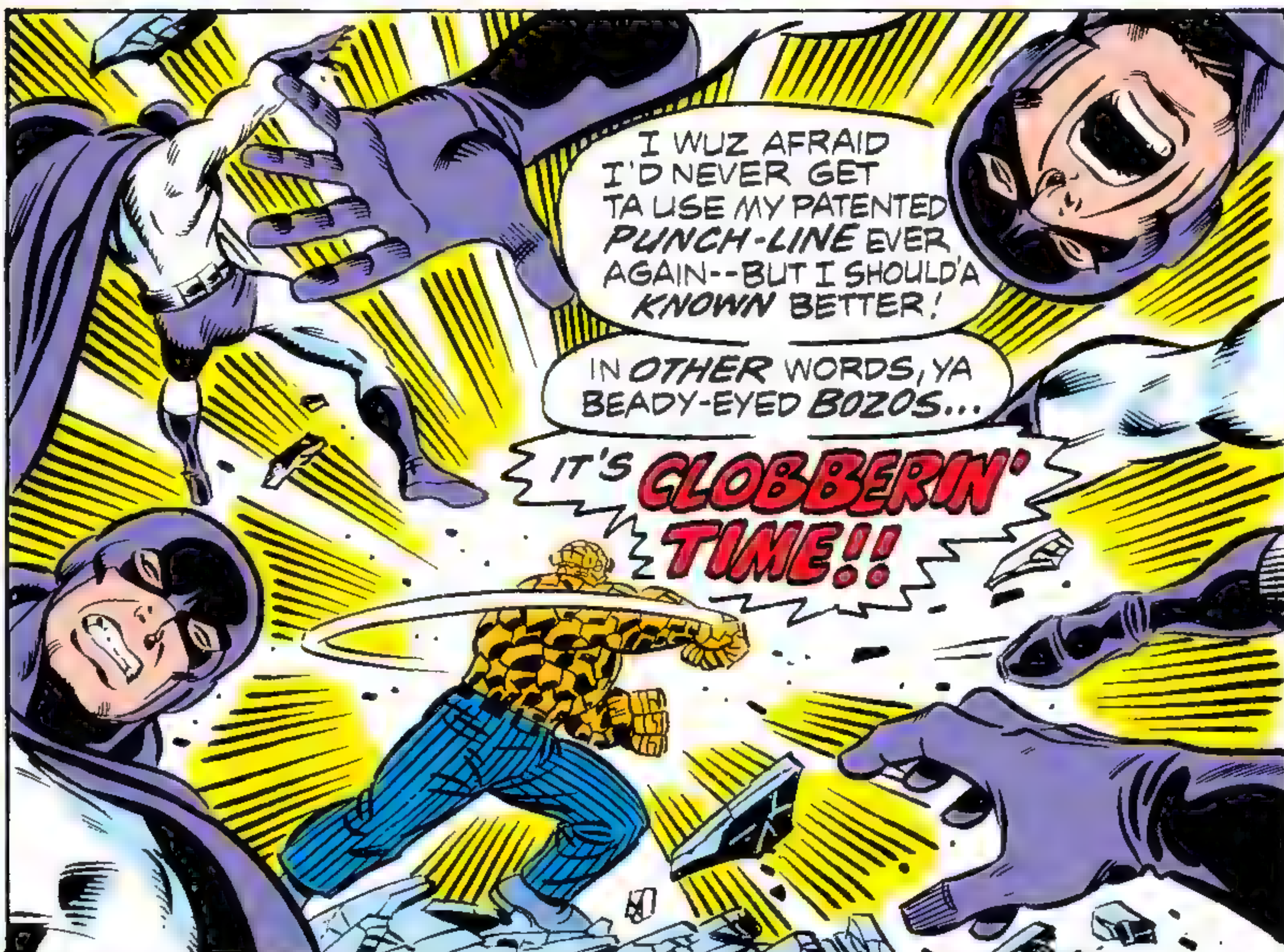
---SO ARE YOU!!!



AND, WITH REED'S AWESOME DEVICES DEACTIVATED...

C'MON, BENJY-- LET'S CLEAN UP THIS MESS!

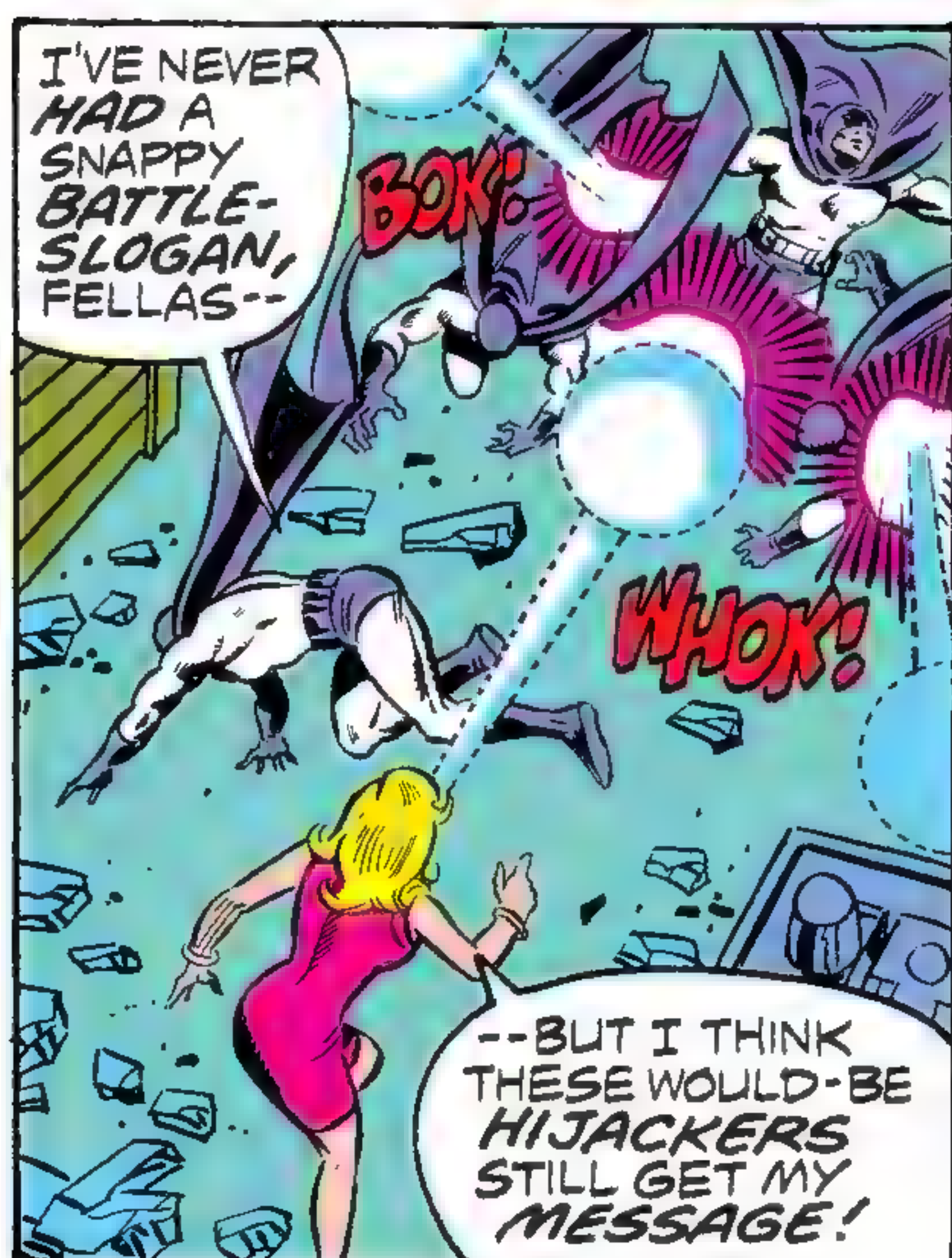
HOTSHOT, I THOUGHT YA'D NEVER ASK!



I WUZ AFRAID I'D NEVER GET TA USE MY PATENTED PUNCH-LINE EVER AGAIN--BUT I SHOULD'A KNOWN BETTER!

IN OTHER WORDS, YA BEADY-EYED BOZOS...

IT'S GLOBBERIN' TIME!!

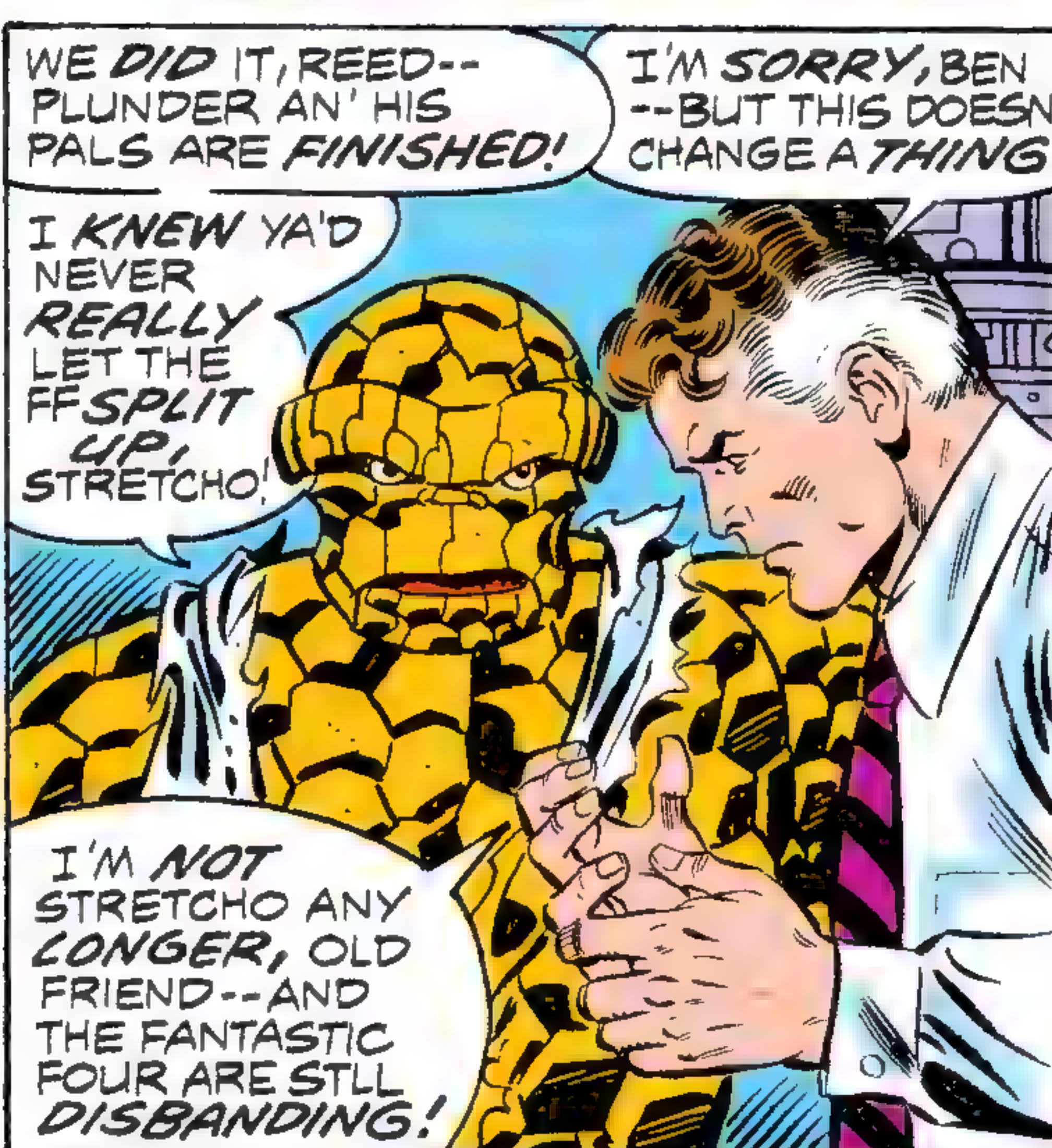


I'VE NEVER HAD A SNAPPY BATTLE-SLOGAN, FELLAS--

BOK!

WHOK!

--BUT I THINK THESE WOULD-BE HIJACKERS STILL GET MY MESSAGE!

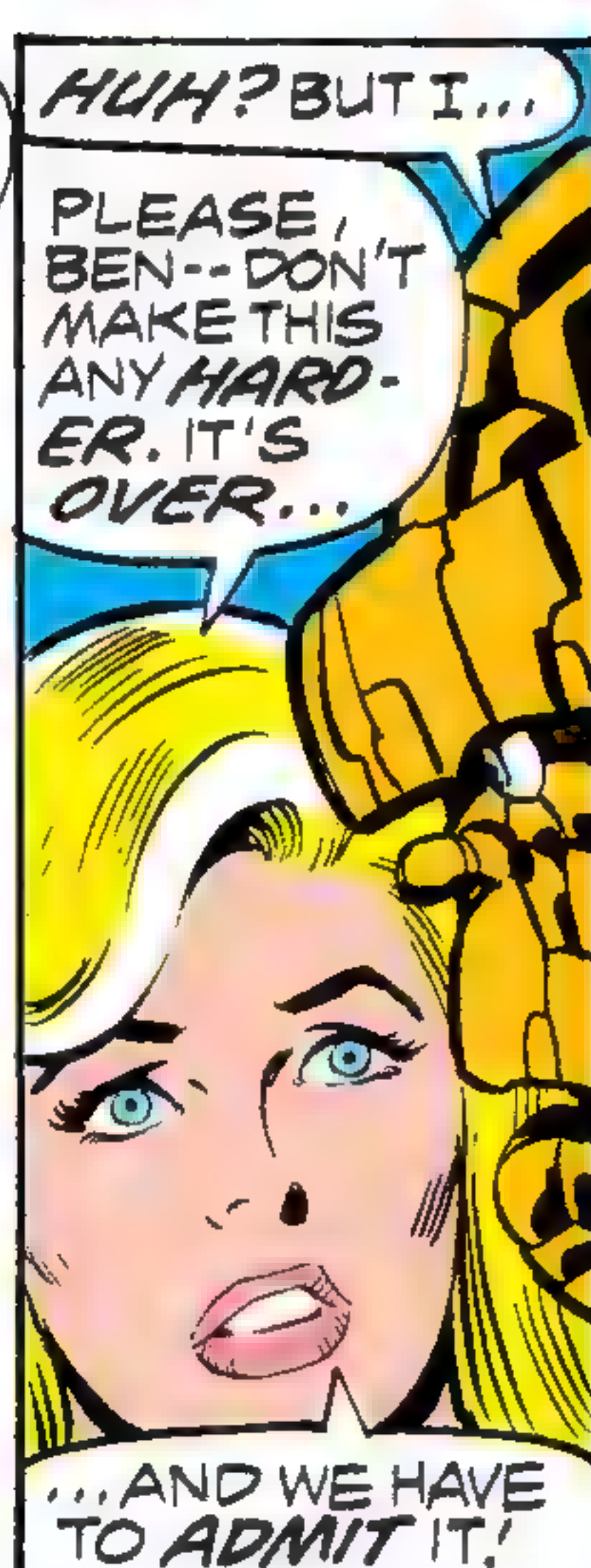


WE DID IT, REED-- PLUNDER AN' HIS PALS ARE FINISHED!

I'M SORRY, BEN --BUT THIS DOESN'T CHANGE A THING!

I KNEW YA'D NEVER REALLY LET THE FF SPLIT UP, STRETCHO!

I'M NOT STRETCHO ANY LONGER, OLD FRIEND--AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE STLL DISBANDING!



HUH? BUT I...

PLEASE, BEN--DON'T MAKE THIS ANY HARD-ER. IT'S OVER...

...AND WE HAVE TO ADMIT IT!

AND THUS, AFTER THE PLUNDER GANG AND REED'S EQUIPMENT HAVE ALL BEEN PROPERLY REMOVED BY SHIELD...

I DON'T THINK I CAN BEAR GOING THROUGH ALL THOSE GOOD-BYES AGAIN!

THEN LET'S JUST CONSIDER 'EM SAID, SUZIE, AN'...

YOU MANIACS! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?

WE AIN'T DONE **NOTHIN'**, COLLINS... LEAST NOT **YET!**

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY-- BUT I'VE SEEN THE **SHAMBLES** YOU LEFT UP-STAIRS!

HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO RENT THAT PLACE IN SUCH **CONDITION?**

Y'KNOW, COLLINS, I OUGHT'A... I OUGHT'A...

AH, WHY **NOT?**

LET ME **OUT** OF HERE, YOU FREAK!

LET ME **OUT!!**

WHY BOTHER? IT'LL GIVE COLLINS SOMETHING TO **REMEMBER** US BY!

REED, SHOULDN'T WE...

LORD, THERE'LL BE SO MANY MEMORIES, REED DARLING... **PRECIOUS** MEMORIES... **PAINFUL** ONES...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S ALL **OVER!**

BUT YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE, SUE--IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ANY SORT OF **FUTURE!**

HEY, LOOKIT WHAT SOMEBODY HAD THE GOOD TASTE TA' **THROW AWAY!**

YA WANT I SHOULD RIP IT INTO **TINY LITTLE PIECES?**

NO, BEN--EVEN IF I **WANTED** YOU TO, YOU **CAN'T!**

BESIDES, IT NO LONGER **CONCERNS** US!

WE DON'T **LIVE** HERE ANYMORE, OLD FRIEND-- **REMEMBER?**

IT'S TIME WE STARTED GETTING **USED** TO IT!

FOR A MOMENT, THEY STAND AND **STUDY** THE NEATLY-LETTERED **SIGN**-- THEN **SORROWFULLY**, THEY TURN AND **WALK AWAY!**

NOW RENTING TOP 5 FLOORS of BAXTER BUILDING (FORMERLY OWNED BY THE FANTASTIC FOUR)
The Management

YOU'D BEST NOTE THE **DATE**, EFFENDI, FOR A **LEGEND** DIED HERE **THIS DAY...**

...AND THE WORLD MAY NEVER SEE ITS LIKE **AGAIN!!**

NEXT ISSUE! IT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- MINUS THREE!-- AS JOHNNY STORM GOES IT ALONE AGAINST MARVEL'S NEWEST SUPER-STAR! BE HERE FOR...

HE WHO SOWETH THE WIND!

The story behind *The Fantastic Four* #176, from the issue's letters page by Roy Thomas



©/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

A Personal View by Roy Thomas

Every once in a while, a story comes along that, like it or don't, you just feel you want to do—no, *have* to do.

Once conceived, this issue of THE FANTASTIC FOUR was one of those stories for me. And, especially now that I've seen the fabulous artwork done for it by Let-George-Do-It Perez, and had a chance to add my own not-necessarily-deathless dialogue—well, I'm just glad my momentary obsession got the better of me.

For better or for worse, F.F. #176 is *also* one of those stories which had such a strange genesis that I'd like to share it with you, okay?

Anyway, I was--

No, wait a minute. Can't start yet. There's something I've got to do first.

Hey, all you sneaky types who read the letters pages of comic-mags before you peruse the stories themselves: Don't read this now, as it's meant to be read as an *afterthought* to the story, not as a *prologue* to it. All right, you have been warned!

Now, what was I saying? Oh, yes....

Anyway, I was up against this deadline, see? George needed a plot—and I was up to my ankles in pages for both the color and black-and-white CONAN books. I knew I wanted to do a story with the Frightful Four (see? We *told* you to read the story first!)—but it was going to be hard getting the F.F. back to earth *and* involved with the Frightful Four all in one tale, especially since I wanted to utilize the Impossible Man for a single issue as well.

So I decided that the only way to do it was to have Impy (as I call him, since he has no real name) go on a Manhattan, or perhaps earthwide, rampage. At first I toyed with having the F.F. battle him all over the world, simply trying to get him to stay put and stop causing trouble. But it was coming hard, and my heart wasn't in it.

Then I had this thought: Actually, it's not so hard getting around the world these days. The hard part is getting across town (and that goes for just about any city, not just NYC, right?).

So I figured, okay, we'll do a story in which the F.F. crash-land the High Evolutionary's space ship in Central Park and spend the whole issue trying to get to the Baxter Building. That'd be fun: bits with trying to get a taxi when there are five of them and New York taxis (except checkered ones, right?) can only take four, etc. Maybe even a colorful cabbie from the tradition which extends from FANTASTIC FOUR #1 thru, er, uh, Travis Bickle.

I even thought immediately of the scene in which the Thing tears the motor out of a guy's honking car—mainly because I've always wished I could do that to somebody who edged into the crosswalk at a stoplight.

And the Impossible Man, of course, would decide to strike out on his own, and he'd end up—where?

The Empire State Building? (It's been done, from King Kong to Gorr.) World Trade Center? (Ka-Zar—and King Kong, courtesy of Dino de Laurentiis.) Statue of Liberty? (Did that myself, years back, in THE HULK.) Chrysler Building? (Who ever *heard* of it?) The subway? (*Everybody* does *that* one, me included.)

I decided to try another approach. Okay, now: the lake in which I wanted the ship to land is near the southeast end of Central Park, right? Right. I know that. *Why* do I know that? Because when I used to be editor-in-chief around here and flee my responsibilities for an hour at lunchtime, I'd often go walking there, because it's only a couple of blocks from--

Marvel Comics.

Yeah.

And so an idea was born. (Whether retroactive birth control should have been practiced is for someone else to decide, not me.)

I immediately called George to clue him in on the plot I was going to mail him, and, though he obviously thought I was out of my bird, he also got very enthusiastic about it. And this is as

good a place as any for me to say "Welcome back!" to Mr. P. on THE FANTASTIC FOUR—and that as far as Ye Editor/Writer is concerned, George has turned in one of the greatest art jobs ever done on this relatively offbeat (and very difficult) type of story. I couldn't have asked for better, pal!

Anyhow, even as I was plotting the tale, another problem: John Verpoorten and Romita informed me that if I wanted Jack "King" Kirby to pencil the cover for F.F. #176, I'd better give him a coast-to-coast phone-call right away and describe a cover scene to him.

And did I *ever* want Jack to do it! After all, he and Smilin' Stan Lee created the character, a decade and a half ago, in one-and-one-only story which, while it did not lead to fabulous sales or such-like, had become a cultish favorite among certain F.F. lovers (myself included, but definitely, since the night in late 1962 I first laid eyes on F.F. #11).

So I called Jack. Yes, he said, he vaguely remembered the Impossible Man. The thin green guy with the pinhead, right? I said right. And here's the important part: I asked Jack to have Impy, on the cover, using some of the gimmicks George and I had planned for the interior, such as hosing the Human Torch and hammering the Thing.

But, as Jazzy Johnny Romita always said: "Jack at his *worst* is better than most guys at their *best*!"

And not only is Jack seldom at his worst—but on this cover, he was definitely at his best!

A few days later, I got this strange penciled cover in the mail which was just what I'd asked, except that Impy was blasting the F.F. with hands shaped like Iron Man's glove and Thor's magic hammer! And there was even a note suggesting he could have shaped a fist like Captain America's shield! Immediately I saw Jack's reasoning: this was the Marvel Comics office, right? So why not have him using Marvel-type gimmicks?

Ten minutes later I was on the phone describing the cover to George, and we instantly decided (since George was just beginning to draw the last half of the book) to utilize Jack's ideas.

And we just wanted you—and Jack—to know it, that's all.

So, there you have it. The offbeat story of an offbeat story. Answer #4579 in a series of answers to the question "Where do you get those nutty ideas?" Answer: From desperation, from perspiration, from inspiration—and sometimes we get by with a bit of help from our friends—guys like Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, who were out there 'way ahead of any of us.

Post scriptum: A couple of days after George finished the story and just as I was about to write it, I learned that—by the sheerest of coincidences—Marv (The) Wolfman had been up at the office taking photos for a Bullpen-oriented story *he* intended to do in his own brand-new action-packed NOVA mag. Panicky lest we accidentally tread on each other's toes, I gave him a call. Marv immediately (and very graciously, I might add) volunteered to scrap his story, but I said why? What he was planning to do, I saw as he outlined it, was wildly different from what I was doing—so, since THE FANTASTIC FOUR would come out first, I'd simply put a couple of lines into George's and my story to foreshadow what he and Sal were going to do in NOVA (and we'll let you guess which ones they were)—while Marv, for his part, could pick up where we left off and we'd all four be working together to strike another blow for Mighty Marvel Continuity!

All in all, the NOVA thing just made the whole thing more exciting to me, if that was possible.

One final note: For once, I think I even wrote a story faster than George can draw it! Namely, I had to sit up all night (from ten in the evening till seven in the morning, with alternate breaks for coffee and collapsing) to finish this critically-late issue. And why did I have to be done by seven? Because at 7:30 I had to go rent a car and drive down to Pennsylvania to meet Peerless Paul Lichter, founder of the Elvis Unique Record Club and one of the few guys around whose collection of Presley memorabilia dwarfs my own, *that's* why!

But, I digress. As is my wont.

Well, that's the story behind the Impossible Man's New York Adventure. We thought you might like to know. We hope we were right.

B I O G R A P H I E S

ROY THOMAS

Along with fellow fan Jerry Bails, Roy Thomas developed the first known organized comic fandom in the pages of *Alter Ego*, a self-published fanzine. Leaving his teaching position in 1965, Roy took his deep knowledge of comics characters and their history and moved to New York City, accepting a job under DC Comics editor Mort Weisinger. His stay lasted little over a week before he opted for a position at Marvel, where under Stan Lee, his duties quickly matured from proofreading to more serious work as an editorial assistant and writer.

Titles as disparate as *Modeling With Millie*, *Kid Colt* and *Sgt. Fury* were written under his auspices before he was able to fulfill his desire to write super-hero stories on Iron Man in *Tales of Suspense* #73 and a pair of Dr. Strange stories for *Strange Tales*.

Stan must have liked what he was reading, because after this seeming trial period, Roy “The Boy” (as he was called in credits) was given both *Sgt. Fury* and *The X-Men*. Along with artist Werner Roth, Thomas took the X-Men on adventures around the world and told the characters’ pre-X-Men origins. In addition to introducing Banshee, Sunfire and Havok, Thomas’ X-Men credits also include his watershed collaboration with artist Neal Adams.

Proving his mettle on *X-Men* led him to *The Avengers*, and it was with this team that Roy really started crafting his legacy. Across 70 consecutive issues of Earth’s Mightiest Heroes, he became perhaps the title’s definitive writer, introducing characters such as the Vision and penning classic sagas including the “Kree/Skrull War.” Before the ’60s ended, Thomas chalked up noteworthy runs as writer of *Doctor Strange*, *Sub-Mariner*, *Captain Marvel* and more.

In the ’70s, Thomas’ influence at Marvel widened to include the first adaptation of Robert E. Howard’s *Conan the Barbarian*, a reinvention of Adam Warlock, and a new super-team, The Defenders. By 1972 Roy was selected to succeed Stan Lee as editor in chief. His tenure as EIC lasted for over two years before he returned to his writer/editor role on *Fantastic Four*, *Thor*, *Savage Sword of Conan*, *What If...?* and *The Invaders*.

In 1980, he left the House of Ideas for DC to pursue a lifelong dream by reviving the Justice Society of America in the pages of *All-Star Squadron*. He wrote many more comics for DC and Marvel over the next two decades and is still active today, writing comics, historical studies, adaptations of classic novels and publishing his award-winning *Alter Ego*. Thomas’ career contributions were acknowledged with his induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame’s 2011 class. He lives in South Carolina with his wife and collaborator, Dann, and an amazing menagerie of animals that must make the neighbors nervous.

LEN WEIN

Len Wein’s career is highlighted by successes from *Swamp Thing* to the “All-New, All-Different” X-Men, but few fans know that the award-winning writer and editor started out as a comic-book artist.

As a teenager, Wein was tied to the hip with fellow fanzine writer Marv Wolfman, regularly skipping school to tour the DC Comics offices. After building a rapport with artists and execs like Dick Giordano, Carmine Infantino and Joe Orlando, Wein was able to credibly pitch to the editors. Though his artwork was politely passed upon, a script for *House of Mystery* was accepted and a career as a writer was born. Len attacked his new occupation with gusto, writing for DC, Marvel, Gold Key and Skywald, on everything from Western to horror, and licensed properties from Hot Wheels to Star Trek.

Although his desired career as an artist didn’t quite pan out, it did give Wein insight into his collaborator’s creative process and helped him garner acclaim as a writer that was “easy to draw.” After super-hero work in the early ’70s (*Daredevil*, *Superman*, *Flash*), he and artist Bernie Wrightson launched horror mainstay *Swamp Thing* in the pages of *House of Secrets* #92. Other notable achievements from his tenure at DC include a run on *Justice League of America* and the debut of the Human Target.

Hopping over to Marvel in 1974, where he followed Roy Thomas as editor in chief, Wein scripted several series, including *Incredible Hulk*, where he and artist Herb Trimpe introduced one of comics’ most famous characters—Wolverine. That wasn’t the end of his mutant milestones, as with artist Dave Cockrum he revived the dormant X-Men property with a new international cast. Its cadre of characters, including Storm, Nightcrawler and Colossus would shortly turn into comics’ biggest phenomenon.

Returning to DC, Wein helped spur a creative revival at the company, editing *New Teen Titans*, *Camelot 3000* and *Swamp Thing*, which gave writer Alan Moore his American debut; shortly thereafter, Wein would preside over Moore and Dave Gibbon’s groundbreaking *Watchmen*. Since then, Wein’s credits in comics, animation and television writing have been numerous and well received as witnessed by his 2008 induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

GEORGE PÉREZ

George Pérez’s intricately detailed style and incomparable ability at drawing team books has made him one of comics’ most popular artists. Like many of his early-’70s peers, Pérez broke in at Marvel drawing for their burgeoning line of black-and-white magazines, most notably the “Sons of the Dragon” feature in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. It was there he and Bill

Mantlo introduced the Puerto Rican hero White Tiger. His first major work came during the latter half of the decade, where he became regular artist of both *Fantastic Four* and *Avengers* before a move to DC. There he took over *Justice League of America* from the late, long-running artist Dick Dillin, but it was a Marv Wolfman-scribed revival of DC's team of teen super heroes, *New Teen Titans*, that was a huge hit, owing especially to Pérez's evocative character designs and masterful line. He would work with Wolfman on the book for over six years. During this time the duo also helmed the epic miniseries *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, featuring the deaths of classic heroes like the Flash and Supergirl.

In 1987, he broadened his creative credentials with his first regular writing gig on *Wonder Woman*, a title he would also draw for the better part of five years. A return to Marvel in 1998 produced a chart-topping revival of *Avengers* with writer Kurt Busiek. This led the creative tandem to the popular DC/Marvel cross-company miniseries *JLA/Avengers*. His most recent credits include a 10-issue run drawing DC's *Brave and the Bold*, and a stint as writer/artist of a new *Superman* series.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and *Fantastic Four*, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants*. His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

GERRY CONWAY

In 1969, 16-year-old Gerry Conway was shopping short stories to DC and Marvel for their horror anthology books. By 1976, Conway had worked his way up to Marvel's editor in chief. In between, he logged highlight after highlight as writer for both companies.

After establishing a pedigree with horror short stories, Conway quickly became the regular writer of *Daredevil*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Iron Man*. He also began runs on *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Thor*, picking up both titles from none other than Stan Lee. He scripted both for nearly 50 issues, writing controversial and classic tales including "The Death of Gwen Stacy," the

first appearance of the Punisher, and the introduction of Harry Osborn as the Green Goblin. Cueing off his early interest in horror stories, Conway took advantage of Marvel's burgeoning line of horror comics, launching *Werewolf By Night* and *Man-Thing*, as well as writing the first issue of *Tomb of Dracula*.

In 1976, he was handed the top job at Marvel before transitioning to DC Comics. One of his first big assignments was writing the script for one of the first inter-company crossovers, *Superman vs. The Amazing Spider-Man*. Shortly thereafter, he began a long tenure on prime DC titles like *Superboy & The Legion of Super-Heroes*, *World's Finest* and *Wonder Woman*. He also introduced Firestorm with Al Milgrom in 1978, scribing all five issues of the short-lived '70s incarnation.

As the '80s dawned, he started a long run writing both key Batman titles, *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, and continued his run on *Justice League of America*, a stint that began in earnest in 1978 and would end with the dismantling of the infamous JLA Detroit in 1986. During this era, he also revived Firestorm with artist Pat Broderick; this time the title found traction and Conway wrote the first 53 issues. A return to Marvel in the late '80s saw Conway tackling two of the three Spider-Man titles: *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and *Web of Spider-Man*.

During this period, Conway was asserting himself as a writer in film and television. His early '80s screenplay collaborations with Roy Thomas resulted in the animated film *Fire and Ice* and barbarian sequel *Conan the Destroyer*. By the late '80s, his opportunities in television writing had expanded, and he left comics to pursue writing and producing for *Matlock*, *Father Dowling Mysteries*, *Diagnosis: Murder* and *Law & Order*.

Today, Conway continues writing and producing for television and has recently returned to script the occasional comic. He resides in California with his wife and their daughter.

ARCHIE GOODWIN

Looking for a job, Archie Goodwin was immediately sized up by publisher Jim Warren to be a meek, quiet fellow who at first glance didn't appear to have the necessary mettle to handle the chaotic life of an editor. But as Goodwin would later say of himself, behind that quiet demeanor was a furtively creative thinker that lived to "lose myself in the fantasy of comics."

As a teenager during the '50s, he was an acolyte of E.C. Comics, contributing material to fanzines like *Hoohah* and *Twig Illustrated*. Though his abiding reputation in comics would come from his writing and editorial abilities, Goodwin studied art at New York's School of Visual Arts. His first work in publishing included turns as strip artist Leonard Starr's assistant, editing for the women's magazine *Redbook* and cartooning for the outdoor magazine *Fishing World*.

His first venture into comic books came in 1964, when he joined

the staff of Warren Publishing. Goodwin quickly made a name for himself both editing and writing for *Creepy* and *Eerie*, and also launched the much-revered *Blazing Combat*. He instilled a degree of class to Warren's small line that helped draw top talent, which in turn established it as a fine inheritor of E.C.'s legacy. His later work for *Vampirella* came in a brief but highly regarded stint that helped to establish a bona fide mythos for the character.

His work at Marvel began in the late '60s with short stints on *Incredible Hulk* and *Fantastic Four*, the latter job giving him the honor of being the first writer to script *FF* other than Stan Lee. But it was his work on *Iron Man* where Goodwin would make his biggest mark on the Marvel Age of Comics, writing the first 28 issues of the character's solo title.

Shortly thereafter, he began a brief writer/editor stint at DC on *Detective Comics* as well as several war titles that Joe Kubert was leaving. He also wrote a well-remembered run of *Manhunter* backup stories in collaboration with Walt Simonson, an artist he had a hand in discovering.

Heading back to Marvel, he served as editor in chief before handing the reins to Jim Shooter. His later accomplishments for Marvel included negotiating licensing for *Star Wars* and other top-selling movie adaptations and launching the Epic line. He also wrote early issues of Wolverine's solo title.

Goodwin returned to DC in 1989 to write and edit until his death from cancer in 1998, still in the prime of a career that saw him establish a legacy in every aspect of the comics field. In particular, he was regarded as a man who handled his job as an editor not simply to shepherd comics through their development process but also to mentor younger editors into fulfilling their own potential.

BILL MANTLO

From the mid-'70s through the late-'80s, Bill Mantlo established himself as one of the most dedicated writers in the comics industry, writing hundreds of stories across dozens of titles, primarily for Marvel Comics.

Mantlo broke into comics as a colorist, but it wasn't long before he was given a crack at writing a fill-in story, a "Sons of the Tiger" story in the black-and-white *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* magazine, and his true comics talent began to emerge. The quality of his work led to his installation as that book's regular writer, a tenure that included the notable achievement of introducing comics' first Puerto Rican hero, the White Tiger.

After achieving notoriety within the Marvel offices as a guy who could knock out credible fill-in scripts at a moment's notice, Mantlo was given more regular work. One early highlight was his 20-issue tenure on *Iron Man* that began the Golden Avenger's return to prominence. As one might expect from

someone with such a volume of work, Mantlo was game to take on projects others dismissed, and he did it with an unfeigned aplomb that elevated the work.

It was on two licensed titles that Mantlo built his legacy. Inspired by a toy given to his son at Christmas, Mantlo lobbied Marvel to adapt Micronauts into an ongoing series. The award-winning epic he spun with artistic luminaries like Michael Golden and Pat Broderick is still highly revered by comics fandom as is his even longer run on *Rom*, wherein he developed a universe filled with Spaceknights, Dire Wraith monsters and outer space intrigue. Other notable credits in Mantlo's career include *Incredible Hulk*, *Alpha Flight* and *Spectacular Spider-Man*.

Just as Mantlo had begun a new career as a public defender with the New York City Legal Aid Society, he was struck by a hit-and-run driver and went into a weeks-long coma from severe head trauma. He has since been under constant medical care. The comics community has led multiple fundraisers to aid in the continuing care of a talented writer who is missed by his many fans.

JIM SHOOTER

Writer/artist/editor/publisher Jim Shooter broke into comics as a precocious 13-year-old after submitting a batch of Legion of Super-Heroes pages he had written and drawn. Impressed by what was going on at Marvel, the teenager brought his "Marvel-style" attitude to bear on Legion, rolling off a three-year run that concluded in 1969. During this time, he introduced several memorable Legionnaires and villains and also wrote several stories in *Superman*. After a five-year break from comics, Shooter returned to the scene, freelancing for both Marvel and DC. He retook the reins of Legion in *Superboy*, and wrote various Marvel titles, which led to a staff position at Marvel in 1976 and a memorable run on *Avengers*. After two years, he succeeded Archie Goodwin as Marvel's editor in chief. In his view, Marvel at that time was in editorial chaos, not capitalizing on its full potential. Only 27 years old, Shooter forced his will over all aspects of the publishing regime, establishing an incentive system for creators, streamlining the publishing schedule and enforcing his own high editorial standards on all the books. He continued Marvel's success with licensed titles *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers* and the Epic line of creator-owned comics. Creative efforts included writing *Secret Wars* and its sequel, and building the New Universe and writing its flagship title, *Starbrand*. Forced out of the company in 1987, a bid by Shooter to buy Marvel failed. He then formed a group to start his own company, Valiant, which produced licensed and original comics to great acclaim in the early '90s. Despite Valiant's success, Shooter's tenure there was ended after losing control of the corporation. Short-lived imprints Defiant and Broadway Comics followed but were victims of the mid-'90s industry bust. Since then, Shooter has returned to DC to write a 13-issue run of *Legion*, and overseen a revival of Gold Key characters Magnus, Doctor Solar and Turok for Dark Horse.

RON WILSON

Brooklyn-born Ron Wilson took his comic art aspirations to Marvel as an 18-year-old and was told by veteran Frank Giacoia that his talent level was “six months away” from getting him work. In 1973, as freshman at the Brooklyn Technical College of Art, Wilson submitted new samples and was hired to draw stories in Marvel’s horror comics. Soon, Wilson turned out quick and quality work on covers, learning the ropes beside the production staff and legends such as John Buscema. Stories in *Power Man*, *Giant-Size Man-Thing* and *Master of Kung Fu* led to the title—and character—he would be most associated with for the rest of his career: the Thing’s *Marvel Two-In-One*. He drew most of the next thirty issues of the title, took a respite to draw the black-and-white *The Hulk!* magazine, and then returned to *Marvel Two-In-One* in the latter part of 1980 to draw most of the rest of its 100-issue run. Once the team-up concept for the Thing drew to a close, Wilson was given the launch of a new *Thing* solo series written by John Byrne; he would draw the first 33 issues of the title. Other credits of the late ’80s include the *Wolfpack* mini-series and graphic novel written by Larry Hama, the Star Comics adaptation of *Masters of the Universe*, and *Super Boxers*, Wilson’s creator-owned graphic novel collaboration with Byrne. In the 1990s, Wilson left monthly comic book illustration but he continues to work today as a commission artist.

MARV WOLFMAN

Marv Wolfman’s stints writing for movies, television, animation and novels mark him as a varied and highly regarded talent, but it is his comic book writing where he first gained prestige as one of the industry’s most acclaimed talents.

His first forays into the comic industry were short tenures as editor and writer for both Warren Publishing and DC Comics, but it was after a move to Marvel in 1972 that his career began to blossom. One of his earliest hits was *Tomb of Dracula*, Marvel’s adaptation of the classic Bram Stoker vampire. It was in the pages of *Tomb of Dracula* that Wolfman and Gene Colan unveiled the character Blade, the vampire hunter. This earthly hero was one of the earliest black heroes in comics and was introduced to further affirm the realism he sought to inject into the Dracula comic.

After editing Marvel’s black-and-white magazines, he quickly stepped up the ladder to follow Len Wein as editor in chief. Wolfman had noted that the readership, who like himself had become loyal fans in their adolescence, felt it was important to have the stories Marvel produced “grow up” along with them. His editorial duties, however, stole time from his writing, so in 1976 he stepped down and took on writing full-time.

As writer of *Daredevil*, his two-year run preceded the Frank Miller era and included the introduction of Bullseye, now the most innovative and fearsome of Daredevil’s rogues’ gallery.

Other work from his prolific Marvel tenure in the late ’70s included lengthy runs on Marvel’s two flagship titles: *The Amazing Spider-Man* (including the debut of the Black Cat) and *Fantastic Four* as well runs on *Nova*, *Doctor Strange* and *Thor*.

Moving to DC, he teamed with artist George Pérez and ushered in *New Teen Titans*. Most of the Titans came to life under his auspices, including Cyborg, Nightwing, Starfire, and Raven, as well as their nemesis Deathstroke. Next, Wolfman and Pérez delivered the epochal *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, condensing DC’s complex 50 year history into a single, shared universe.

Taking a lengthy sabbatical from writing comics, Wolfman moved to writing for animation shows including *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*, later becoming comics editor for *Disney Adventures Magazine*. He continues to write for DC Comics and more recently, has penned the nonfiction *Homeland, the Illustrated History of the State of Israel*. In 2011 Marv was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS LIBRARY

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-16
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-2
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-15
THE BLACK PANTHER VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-7
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-5
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-8
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-4
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-6
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-17
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-9
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-9
IRON FIST VOLS. 1-2
KA-ZAR VOL. 1
MARVEL RARITIES VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-2
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOL. 1
MS. MARVEL VOL. 1
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-6
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-13
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-9

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!



PRINTED IN CHINA

